National Library of Canada

Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

MIRRORS AND WINDOWS:

THE MOVEMENT OF MEANING IN TATTOOS

©

BY

BRENDA MARIE CAMPBELL

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING 1993

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-82255-4

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: Brenda Marie Campbell

TITLE OF THESIS: Mirrors and Windows: The Movement of Meaning in Tattoos

DEGREE: Master of Arts

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1993

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or to sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in an material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

Brenda Campbell

Brenda Campbell
Box 3386
Athabasca, Alberta
TOG OBO

DATE: January 8, 1993

Give a man a mask and he will tell the truth.

—Oscar Wilde

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Mirrors and Windows: The Movement of Meaning in Tattoos*, by Brenda Campbell in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Jean DeBernardi, Ph.D., Supervisor

Carl Urion, Ph.D.

Eric Higgs, Ph.D.

Date Nov. 27, 1992

Dedicated to my mom, Catherine Harriett Wynnyk

ABSTRACT

In the two hundred years since tattooing has been (re-)introduced to the West, the phenomenon has gone though cycles of acceptance and rejection as an art form. At present, tattoos and tattooing are flourishing, as people, many from outside the "traditional" clientele of the tattoo world, accept and integrate these powerful symbols onto their bodies. What are the factors in our urban world which have influenced this evolution and acceptance of tattooing? Models used in the objectification of this phenomena are reviewed in an attempt to understand the movement of meaning; narratives are used to garner hermeneutic understanding. A change from affiliative to individuative tattoo reflects the affirmation of self and positive body image in a post-industrial world which often lacks any personal meaning for the individual, whether as consumer or producer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the years of graduate school, circumstances have afforded me the opportunity of having not just one, but four advisors. Each person has influenced the development of this thesis, and together I feel fortunate in recognizing their influences on me.

I want to thank Regna Darnell, Susan Rowley, Carl Urion, and Jean DeBernardi.

Interest in tattoos and tattooing by others has proven a boon in the accessibility of research materials. Many people have helped me in this regard, from colleagues slipping articles and magazines into my mailbox to Randy Welklych, a retired Edmonton tattooist who agreed to be interviewed. I wish to thank Agnes Honish, an epidemiological nurse for the City of Edmonton for assess to her tattoo literature. Finally, I wish to thank Gyorgy Ozoray for his support and interest via European articles, in the completion of this thesis. Structural, technical, and editorial imput from Jean, Carl, and (with special thanks) Ruth Gruhn, has resulted in a text that manages to constrain concepts 'intrinsic to a surplus of meaning'.

I also wish to thank the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and the Vice-President (Research) of the University of Alberta for travel assistance provided by the Mary Louise Imrie Graduate Award. This award enabled me to present a paper drawn from this thesis at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meetings (December 1992) at San Francisco.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER 1 5
The Development and Influences of Western Tattooing 5
The Tattoo Renaissance 11

CHAPTER 2 13
Psychoanalysis and Tattooing 13

CHAPTER 3 19
Considerations of Theory Regarding Tattoo Symbolism 19
The Traditional/Fine Art Dialectic 19
A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective 22
Tattoo as Product: Tattoo as Stimuli 23
Purchase and Possession Risk 23
The Psychological/Cultural Problem 25
Psychological Motives 26
Final Considerations 28

CHAPTER 4 30
Subjective Imagery 30
From George Burchett, tattooist 31
From Stoney St. Clair, 'tattooer' 33
From Don Ed Hardy, tattooist 35
From Captain Don, a heavily-tattooed sword-swallower and fire-eater 37
From Jane Hand, tattooed person 37
From Leo Zulueta, tattooist 37
From Lyle Tuttle, tattooist 38
From Randy Welklych, tattooist 39
From Vyvyn Lazonga, tattooist 42
From Charlie Cartwright, tattooist 42
From Greg Kulz, tattooist 43
Discussion 44
Conclusion 48

REFERENCES 52

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Factors Affecting a Product's Definition as Art (Sanders 1983b:156) 21

Table 2. Risk Reduction Strategies for Purchasing a Tattoo (after Sanders 1985:19) 24

INTRODUCTION

Some years before I considered the possibility of attending university, I worked as a barmaid at various establishments throughout the city of Edmonton. One particular bar, a stripper's tavern on Jasper Avenue, introduced me to tattoo art that I considered beautiful. Previously, I had often noticed tattoos on patrons and friends; but these were often crude affairs, usually dark blue figures, names, or initials that bore the wearer, outside of one's clique, embarrassment and regret. Or, when the tattoo was done skillfully, the motif appeared stereotypical, or dated. Black panthers and red roses, eagles and flags; these tattoos held little aesthetic value for me. Aesthetics, as I have found, is a much more complicated set of notions than what I had thought. Once viewed as a pleasurable interaction between my cognitive imperative to create meaning and the object of conferred meaning (the object being a **good** idea, a **good** sculpture, a **good** poem, or a **good** tattoo), aesthetics also define what art is. A particular group of individuals have the power, as it were, to set limitations (read categories) on the definition of art, and thus in an additional approach to aesthetics (that is, whether or not one agrees with any particular definition of art) one is put at either end of an art/nonart dialectic. One must consider tradition in aesthetics. Aesthetics, as an 'art world' category, is seen as logically conventional; whereas the aesthetic experience is innovative in its novelty. The aesthetic experience is ancient; it is emotional, liminal, and constantly new.

One of the bouncers at this bar was in the process of working on a large tattoo. The people that this man knew were of the tattoo world that I wanted to experience. Beautiful tigers rolled across their chests; magnificent gardens grew up their bodies, from ankle to shoulder. Samurai met in mortal combat with dragons on one's entire back. Twelve months later I belonged to the world as I came to see the world to be: tattooed and not-tattooed.

Now, eleven years later, this dichotomy still sometimes informs my world view. Many cultural settings create the context(s) necessary for the interpretation(s) of the meaning of tattoo. Tattoo is a very powerful symbol. It can carry great appeal or instigate great abhorrence. How can an anthropologist consider an aspect of culture that expresses meaning and value in so many ways? Further, what are the pitfalls in assuming one can understand these symbols outside of their context and the individuals that wear them? Everyone knows about tattoos; everyone has an opinion.

Literature of the topic of tattoos is divided into roughly two camps: first, tattoo as pathology, discussed primarily in terms of psychoanalytic theory; and second, tattoo discussed in context of life histories, autobiographies, and published interviews. The first camp is critiqued as chapter 2. Within the second camp, the relativity of the context often makes the concept of deviance moot. For example, Govenar's (1977:47) narrator (Stoney St. Clair) relates that people criticize tattoos as they criticize sailors and dogs, because they don't know or understand them. Stoney's life history is that

of a carnival man, someone with decades of experience in tattooing. He and his clientele hold tradition-bound, conventional perspectives towards tattooing.

However, within a definition of innovation (as a challenge to orthodoxy), the concept of deviance may be precisely the reason one obtains a tattoo! Bourdieu (1980:253) explains:

> Tastes (i.e., manifested preferences) are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference. It is no accident that, when they have to be justified, they are asserted purely negatively, by the refusal of other tastes. In matters of taste, more than anywhere else, all determination is negation; and tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance ('sick-making') of the tastes of others.

Bourdieu's dichotomy, as it were, between 'high' aesthetics and 'popular' taste, is never neutral, but rather indicates a power struggle over the legitimation of **art**, a struggle that defines the 'popular aesthetic' in relation to 'high' aesthetics, a definition that negatively judges 'popular' taste (ibid:237). The process of tattooing itself, as well as the socio-historic origins of this practice in the West, is viewed as distasteful because tattooing does not coincide with accepted definitions of art.

But tattoo cannot be discussed only in terms of its being, or not being, an art form. It is empowering both as an aesthetic experience, and as an enhancement of body image. In the two hundred years since tattooing has been (re-)introduced to the West, the phenomenon has gone through cycles of acceptance and rejection as an art form. Presently, tattoos and tattooing are flourishing, as people, many from outside the 'traditional' clientele of the tattoo world, accept and integrate these powerful symbols onto their bodies. This tattoo 'renaissance' is recognized by changes such as the shift of emphases on the definition of tattoo (from within a tattoo tradition) to that of the meaning of tattoo as an individuative, and individuating relationship: the tattoo/self metaphor. I will consider the factors that have influenced this evolution and acceptance of tattooing.

Hebdige (1988:80) asks how we can hope to provide a comprehensive and unified account of all the multiple values and meanings which accumulate around a single object over time; the different symbolic and instrumental functions it can serve for different groups of users separated by geographical, temporal, and cultural location. I feel that a theoretical perspective that grounds itself via a hermeneutic understanding of text perspective(s) can offer us such an account. As Bourdieu states:

> One of the difficulties of sociological discourse lies in the fact that like all discourse, it unfolds in strictly linear fashion whereas, to escape over-simplification and one-sidedness one needs to be able to recall at every point the whole network of relationships found there. (Bourdieu 1980:255)

I understand the hermeneutic circle as a technique of interpretation of cultural forms in terms of meaning between part and whole, a circular logic of inquiry. Obeyesekere (1990:xxiv) explains that some of the philosophical premises and assumptions of hermeneutics are quite varied and even disparate, yet general agreement is available on some issues. Notable problems include the nature of the subject-object relationship; the problems that arise when one studies subjects who have ideas similar to that of the investigator; and the difficulty of interpreting symbolic forms characterized intrinsically by a surplus of meaning.

The first point, that of the subject-object relationship, is extremely difficult to define. Some people consider their tattoos as decorations upon their bodies; and objectify them as they would jewelry or clothing. Others consider the art more intrinsic to their bodies; and view the tattoo as talismanic and empowering (more so than jewelry or clothing) and as such it can be considered as a somatic reification via body imagery. Also, as Tucker (1983:47) notes:

> Tattooing today embodies the subject/object relationship to which so much recent art has addressed itself...but it does so in a more complex manner, since the person on whom the work has been done, rather than the artist, takes on the subject/object character.

The second point, that of my identification with tattooed individuals, has led me to the concern of whether I can recognize meaning if such meaning is not already known by me to be true, as it were; or, just as importantly, if such meaning is not already known by me to be not true. By looking at 'what others say', my understanding widens, and is re-interpreted. Because of this 'surplus' of meaning(s), the idea of the hermeneutic circle affords me the paradigm to self-reflect, and garner a restoration of meaning.

Chapter 1, a short 'history' on the development of Western tattooing, is a paraphrase of the literature on the topic. With history, as with other problems inherent in writing, one struggles with what Geertz (1988:129) calls, "the burden of authorship". It is my intention in Chapter 1 to give simply a short outline of ethnographer/writers such as Lemes'(1978) (questionable character) and Sturtevant's (1971) (ethnographic authority) descriptions of this history. As an historical overview of the origin of Western tattooing, from Egyptian mummies and Captain Cook, we move through an examination of historical anecdotes concerning tattooed exhibits in Europe and America; its association with fighting men; its "Golden Age"; and finally its renaissance.

Chapter 2 examines the deviance association that is correlated to tattooing in the psychoanalytic literature. Assumptions about the nature of mental pathology have only served to reinforce the association of deviance with tattoos. I think this chapter is important. By recognizing that a pathological paradigm cannot adequately reflect the meaning of tattoos, we can question to what extent other social sciences can. Further,

one can differentiate **power** balances between the authority of psychoanalysis and tattooed people (read academe and non-academe).

Chapter 3 explores these other extents of understanding, by reviewing models which assist in the interpretability of tattoos. The distinctions between cultural and psychological symbolism, as well as other important dialectics within art theory and symbolic interactionism, are outlined and defined. Tattoos are discussed within sociological analogies of game and ritual theory. According to Geertz (1983:28), such theory brings out the historical and collective dimensions of social action, its public nature, and also "its power to transmute not just opinion but...the people who hold them." As a metatheory useful for cultural anthropology, this thesis supports Obeyesekere (1990:xxi) in considering Freudian metatheory in terms of nomological structure. These models give the theoretical grounding for a series of short narratives which were compiled in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 allows for a layering of information about the tattoo world; for example, pieces of interpretations of its history, of psychological **and** social motivations. Here are the tattooists who 'know how'. What is emphasized throughout these narratives is the theme of alienation in post-industrial society. Meaning is found in the social experience of the individual.

This thesis concludes with an analysis of the meaning of tattoos. What I feel more than ever is the history. I like all tattoos now, not just the ones that followed my pre-thesis aesthetic. I felt it necessary first to outline and describe the tattoo world as best I could in order that I may possibly avoid the rubric of 'hyper-subjectivity'. Any 'epistemic hypochondria' (with apologies to Marvin Harris), as it were, arises out of a consideration of understanding culture nomologically (if one wishes to consider deep motivation), and 'knowing' (as a tattooed individual in a social world) the particular.

The boundedness of these texts create an 'horizon', to turn a Gadamar phrase, which fuses with the theoretical considerations and the autobiographies and interviews to create, as far as I can, a new text. I am aware of the strategies for dealing with 'ethnographic embarrassment' (Behar 1990:1): the "ethnographic ventriloquism" of speaking from someone else's point of view; in trying to be "an honest broker" for the texts produced by others; in writing "heteroglossial" texts that disperse authorship; or in "authorial self-inspection" to reveal the presuppositions behind my text (Geertz 1988:130-149). I wrote the thing, and I want to understand the how and why of tattooing: to recognize tattoo as a symbol, and couch our investigations with this concern.

CHAPTER 1

The Development and Influences of Western Tattooing

What exactly is Western tattooing? Tattooing itself refers to a process whereby colour is applied under the skin to create a permanent mark. Western tattooing is the European and American styles (especially in design) of this process. In many ways, what defines Western tattooing are the designs that are used for tattoos. Western tattooing's 'origin', as it were, is placed in time and space, circa 1769. Western tattooing's 'demise', as it were, is also placed in time and space, circa 1960. I make this statement because I feel that previous to 1960, there was a set way to define, obtain, or produce a tattoo, in the Western sense. Since then, a tattoo 'renaissance' has taken place, a re-application of traditions, designs, and methodologies that have changed how the tattoo world is being expressed, and further, how the tattoo world is being received and interpreted.

The first direct archeological records of tattooing were found on Egyptian mummies which were dated to 2000 B.C. Female mummies from the XI Dynasty were found to have rows of dark blue dots on their arms, legs, and lower abdomen. Further, there are tattoos on the "Iceman"; a man of the Late Neolithic, found frozen in the Alps in 1991, who was dated at 3300 B.C. (Gruhn 1992: pers.comm.). Lemes (1978:2) and Sturtevant (1971:2) feel that there are indications that tattooing spread throughout the globe at this time, from Egypt along the trade routes to the Mediterranean area, east to Persia and Arabia, and across Asia to China. Tattooing is mentioned in the Bible, where prohibitions are found because of its connection with the cult of the dead. "You shall not gash yourselves in mourning for the dead; you shall not tattoo yourselves (Leviticus 19:28)."

Religious tattooing among the Christians may have been prevalent among the followers of Jesus, "In the future let no one make trouble for me, for I bear the marks of Jesus branded on my body (Galatians 6:17)." As well, Revelations, 7:3 and 22:4 make mention of a seal or mark upon the foreheads of God's followers. Tertullian, a second century A.D. Roman, noted the custom of tattooing women among the Britons, Picts, and Scots (Lemes 1978:3). While Moses (via Leviticus) was the first to forbid tattooing, Constantine banned face tattooing; and in 787 A.D. at the Synod in Northumberland all tattooing of Christians was banned. While Christianity had called a halt to 'barbaric practices', and the ban was repeated in the following centuries, the art survived in Britain until 1066. The Anglo-Saxon King Harold was heavily tattooed, and was identified from the battlefield at Hastings by the word 'Edith' tattooed over his heart (Burchett 1958:17-18). Burchett (1958:18) feels that after the Norman invasion, nothing was heard of tattooing in the British Isles for many centuries.

However, tattooing practices survived in many ways. Sturtevant (1971:3) explains that although the Koran forbids tattooing, Moslems tattoo extensively for

decorative and therapeutic purposes, the rationale being that the purifying fires before entering Paradise will remove all the marks. The tattooed cross survived as a Christian symbol used by Nestorian monks from Europe to the Orient, and Greek references find tattooed Christian slaves brought by the Turks from the East.
Pilgrims to Jerusalem as early as the 16th century had themselves tattooed on their forearms. In 1685, from Jerusalem, Thevenot, a French pilgrim, wrote:

> We spent all Tuesday, April 19, in having our arms marked as ordinarily all the pilgrims do; it is the Bethlehem Christians following the Latin rite who do that. (In: Sturtevant 1971:3)

This custom persisted; in 1862 the Prince of Wales had a cross of Jerusalem tattooed on his forearm. According to A.T. Sinclair (who in 1908 wrote that, "A large proportion of our naval officers at some time visit Jerusalem, and I have never been able to hear of one who did not conform to the usual custom"), the tattooers in Jerusalem were actually Gypsies (In: Sturtevant 1971:3), a group who also tattooed Moslem pilgrims at Mecca and Medina. In the 19th century, pilgrims at the Italian Shrine of Loretta have had wrist tattoos, a custom "presumably" from the 13th century (the shrine's inception). Also, Sturtevant (1971:4) suggests that the tattooing practices and designs among the Bosnian Catholics "seem to go back to ancient times in this region."

Europeans continued being tattooed, then, but rarely. European languages have no specific term for tattooing. In English, tattooing was called 'pricking', or 'marking' or 'painting'. Sturtevant (1971:4) explains that "for this reason and because of the strangeness of the technique, explorers often took pains to explain that the designs were permanent."

While explorer/travel journals described to the Europeans the cross-cultural phenomenon of tattooing from Asia and the Americas, the 'birth' of Western tattooing did not occur until the Europeans 'discovered' Polynesia. Captain Cook is the individual most credited with familiarizing Europeans with tattooing. In 1769, while exploring the South Pacific, he found in Tahiti that:

> Both sexes paint their Bodys, Tattow, as it is called in their Language. This is done by inlaying the Colour of Black under their skins, in such a manner as to be indelible. (In: Sturtevant 1971:6)

Thus, the Europeans, who had been pricking and gouging their skins for centuries, had a name for the process. The word is derived from "ta", which is a polynesian word for "to strike, beat, or tap; to tattoo", the action used in applying tattoos (Lemes 1978:7,Sturtevant 1971:6). Sturtevant (1971:6) explains that the Tahitian pronunciation is tatau, meaning, "the results of tapping". Further, the term for tattoo has been reconstructed for proto-Austonesian (Gruhn 1992: pers.comm.). However, Burchett (1958:19), writes that fifty years before Cook, the word 'tattoo' is

used to refer to the beating of military drums. The meaning of the word 'tattaw' may have been equated with the already familiar word 'tattoo', which also indicates a strike or tap, and which roots are Latin.

Tattooed persons became great circus attractions. The history of tattooed exhibits dates back to 1691, when the pirate/explorer William Dampier brought back to London the "Painted Prince Jeoly" for display, "overnight the sensation of London's fashionable society of William and Mary's reign" (Burchett 1958:20). Dampier met the 'prince' as a slave on the island of Meangis, near Mindanao, in 1686; and brought him to London for exhibition, where he died of smallpox (Sturtevant 1971:6). According to Burchett (1958:22), the 'Painted Prince" was the pioneer of the great revival of the art in the West. Others followed. In 1769, the Tahitian Aorotu was exhibited in Paris; likewise for Cook's friend Amai in London in 1777. The first tattooed European to be publically exhibited was Jean Baptist Cabri, a French sailor who had jumped ship in 1795 in the Marquesas (Ebensten 1953:16). In 1789, a Duchess wrote home to Italy, explaining that when she met a sailor whose arms and legs were tattooed in 'the Tahitian custom', she found in actuality the designs to be a crucifix, the English coat of arms, the Holy Sacrament, and 'il capo di Plicinello' (Sturtevant 1971:6). Thus, one can see the use of Western design by the end of the 18th century. In the United States, an Irishman named O'Connell joined a circus in 1835 after spending some three to five years in Micronesia, exhibiting himself until 1854 (ibid:7). During the 19th century Europe and America became more aware of tattooing through P.T. Barnum, by displaying Georg Constantine, a man completely covered with Burmese tattoos. Except for the soles of his feet, Georg's entire body, including eyelids, nostrils, face, and fingers, was tattooed in a menagerie of detailed animal forms interspaced with letters from the Burmese alphabet. By 1900, the value of a tattooed exhibit declined because the phenomenon was no longer rare as it once had been. By 1932, the tattooed fat lady, M.S. Stevens, was one of the last circus side-show stars to enjoy fame (Lemes 1978:10).

For some 150 years, then, tattooed persons entertained western aristocratic circles and the public via exhibition. Tattooing became seen as a deviant practice, a curiosity exhibit of circuses and sideshows. P.T. Barnum displayed tattooed, dwarfs, wrestlers, and even entire families (such as Frank and Annie Howard). During the Depression, unemployed people became heavily tattooed in order to make a living, creating further definition of tattooed-person-as-freak (Sanders 1989b:18).

During the 17th and the 18th centuries, Europe was unaware of the quality the art of tattooing had achieved in Japan (Burchett 1958:18). In Japan tattooing developed to a fine art. In the third century A.D. Han-Wei wrote that "the men all tattoo their faces and adorn their bodies with designs." Initially, the position and size of the pattern indicated a man's rank; but later the upper classes spurned the practice of tattooing, and tattooed crosses became the mark of criminals. The Genroku period (1688-1704) saw a revival among the lower classes, substituting tattooing for clothing. It was just after this period that many of the outstanding artists of the day developed tattoo

patterns which were used to perfect the hand techniques of tattooing. The subtlety of form and design were unsurpassed.

Japan admitted Europeans during the later half of the 19th century. Sturtevant (1971:9) writes that although tattooing was limited to the lower classes of society, the Japanese style was the most technically accomplished. Visitors soon acquired Japanese tattoos, and Japanese tattooists set up shop in England and America. European royalty became engrossed with the Japanese art. In 1881 the two sons of the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Clarence and Prince George, sought a tattooing and had dragons put on their arms. In 1891 the foremost tattooist of Japan, Hori (master) Chiyo, tattooed Tsar Nicholas (Lemes 1978:7-8).

Sailors frequented Oriental seaports and brought home exotic evidence of their travels. Dragons and wild beasts decorated their bodies, and these designs were envied and copied by those at home. Among sailors, tattooing became a maritime diversion. A full-rigged ship on the chest represented a sail around Cape Horn; or marked the bravery of the topman, the sailor who climbed the rigging. An anchor denoted a cruise on the Atlantic. Sailors on windjammers had "HOLD FAST" tattooed on their knuckles as a reminder when aloft. In the British Navy a crucifix on the back of a sailor spared the victim from flogging. In 1720 the British Army initiated the practice of imprinting a "D" for deserter and "BC" for bad character in half inch letters onto the side of the chest with a block of needles. These were rubbed with gunpowder or India ink, a practice abolished in 1869 (Lemes 1978:8).

In 1875 S.F. O'Reilly changed the tattooing world with the invention of an electrically operated tattooing machine which was patented in 1891. An early version worked on a rotary principle, but this machine was replaced by the electromagnetic reciprocating machine which is essentially unchanged to this day. Designs that previously required hours and days of exacting hand work now took only minutes to execute. Great numbers of tattoos could be produced in a very short time. The electric technique was improved with the invention of the shader tattoo machine patented in 1904 (Lemes 1978:9). Sturtevant (1971:9) notes that the techniques of Euroamerican tattooers previous to the electric needle followed the techniques of the Japanese, rather than the Polynesians. Japanese tattooists used groups of needles set into straight handles, different sizes and numbers for different work, very different from the Polynesian miniature sharp-toothed rake, which was tapped into the skin with a stick.

Tattooing reached a "golden age" in Europe at the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s. In the 1890s the royalty of Britain, Russia, Germany, and Scandinavia vied to become tattooed. In 1893, "the visiting Earl of Craven almost drowned his amazed fellow bathers in the pool of the New York Racquet Club when he appeared flaunting his uncovered tattoos." (quoted in Lemes 1978:10). Ladies tattooed the initials of their fiancees on their insteps. A London reader of the Pall Mall Gazette suggested that a circle be tattooed around the fingers as a sign of marriage, with various combinations of rings indicating divorces and remarriages. An American

upper-middle class fad was for women to tattoo a butterfly on their shoulders. Lady Randolf Churchill (Jenny Jerome, Winston Churchill's mother) was tattooed with a snake encircling her wrist (Lemes 1978:10). Burchett (1958:98) writes, "In those days of the outgoing Victorian era and the reign of Edwardian exuberance there were two great tattoo artists who attracted clients from almost every great house in Europe." The tattooists were Riley and Macdonald. Burchett (1958:98) himself received "titled" clients, who "did not mind visiting that rather slummy district in London's East End. Indeed, they seemed to enjoy mixing with sailors, dockers and other rough diamonds who congregated in my dingy workrooms."

According to Sanders, for the most part, the European middle class was not affected by what the press had named the "tattoo rage." Tattoo consumers were sailors, craftsmen, the military, and members of the aristocracy. The most popular designs were South Sea and nautical images, identification via military and craft guild insignia, religious tattoos, marks of political allegiance, and love vows. The London World carried lurid accounts of aristocrats' tattoo experiences, aristocrats such as Nicholas II, George of Greece, Oscar of Sweden, Wilhelm of Germany, and most males of the British royal family (Sanders 1989b:15, Ebensten 1953:16-20).

Burchett (1958:25) claims that he was unable to discover any professional tattooists at work in England during the early 19th century, although certain amateurs were in great demand aboard ships and in the ports. In America, however, Martin Hildebrandt, an immigrant from Germany, came to Boston in 1846 and became a full-time tattooist. He tattooed patriotic emblems on soldiers fighting both sides of the American Civil War from 1861-1865. By the middle of the 19th century there were professional tattooists in France, Algiers, the Holy Land, Italy and Hamburg. In England, David Purdy set up a booth in the 1870s; but Burchett (1958:26) feels that it was not until the 1890s, in particular not until the tattooists Tom Riley and Sutherland Macdonald came upon the scene, achieving fame and fortune, did tattooists have "many crowned heads among their customers." Burchett writes:

> In my opinion King Edward VII acted as the curtain raiser to the golden age of tattooing when he acquired his first tattoo design in Jerusalem in 1862. Many distinguished travellers to the shrines of the Holy Land commissioned permanent reminders of their pilgrimage from the able school of tattooists which was in practice there. (loc.cit.)

On December 12, 1897, the following question was posed to readers of the New York Herald:

> Have you had your monogram inscribed on your arm? Is your shoulder blade embellished with your crest? Do you wear your coat-of-arms graven in India ink on the cuticle of your elbow? No? Then, gracious madame and gentle sir,

> you cannot be au courant with society's latest fad. (quoted in Sanders 1989b:16)[1]

The "Golden" age of tattooing, then, is so named because of its popularity amongst the American and European elite.

Along with Martin Hildebrand, other American artists during this period in the New York Bowery and other East coast cities include Samual F. O'Reilly, "Professor" Charlie Wagner, Jack Hanley ("The World Famous Tattooist"), and Lewis (Lew-the-Jew) Alberts (ibid:16). In 1900 "Lew-the-Jew" quit his job as a wallpaper hanger, a decision that had a major influence on the contents of tattoo designs. He worked as a tattooist in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, and his designs incorporated many wallpaper patterns. As late as 1933, as many as half of the tattoo designs found on the wall "flash" used in professional American shops were from Lew the Jew's classic drawings (Lemes 1978:11).

By the early 20th century, tattooing began to lose favour among the American elite. Ward McAllister, a member of New York's Four Hundred, expressed this view when he explained to the press that tattooing was:

> certainly the most vulgar and barbarous habit the eccentric mind of fashion ever invented. It may do for an illiterate seaman, but hardly for an aristocrat. Society men in England were the victims of circumstances when the Prince of Wales had his body tattooed. Like a flock of sheep driven by their master, they had to follow suit. (quoted in Sanders 1989b:17)

Sanders (1989b:18) feels that for reasons such as the overt distaste of tattooing by the elite, the media stories of venereal diseases contracted in unhygienic tattoo establishments, and the popularity of tattooing within 'socially marginal sub-cultures', tattooing fell into disrepute by the 1920s. An exclusive emblem of seafaring became progressively plagiarized through urban tattoo parlours and travelling carnivals. Modern tattoo styles still reveal their origins. Figures of birds, animals, butterflies, dragons, and snakes are derived from designs of the master tattooists of Burma and Japan, while explicitly religious, sensuous, or patriotic themes (eagles, flags, hearts, women, etc.) became known as "American work" (Grumet 1983:483).

Govenar's (1981) text categorizes the movement of tattoo motifs through history, in the linear sense of the word. The motifs defining the decades are as follows:

---

[1] An irresistible footnote:

> "Like to keep abreast of titillating new products?" the March 1989 ad in New York Woman reads, describing hand-crafted non-piercing nipple rings designed to "enhance a lady's profile." Silver bands start at $26.50 up to $10,000 for diamond-encrusted nipple rings. (In: Vale and Juno 1989:197)

1770s-1850s: Hearts, flowers, stars, crucifixes, butterflies, birds, women, lettering, scrolls, daggers, skulls, snakes, military insignia, patriotic slogans, occupational emblems.

1850s-1900: Mermaids, seahorses, sharks, high-masted sailing ships, clasped hands, shields, American flags, eagles, lightning bolts, and dragons.

Early 1900s (to present): Cartoon figures 'reintroduced'; Mutt and Jeff, Any Gump, Maggie and Jigs, Betty Boop, Felix the Cat, Pogo, Mighty Mouse, the Road Runner, the Pink Panther.

World War I: Wagner's "Rose of No-Man's Land" (a Red Cross nurse), hula girls, "Pharaoh's Horses" (to the 1940s), Gibson girls, battle ships, sailing vessels, Indian girls and 'western' designs, oriental designs.

Pre-World War II: Tattoos became 'more gruesome'; demons, fire, cobras, skulls, grim reapers, blue birds (previously red and green), horseshoes, women, dice, and panthers.

1950s: Panthers are the most popular motif, with another sharp increase in 'gruesome' tattoos.

1960s: Patriotic tattooing resurges during every war. It was during Vietnam, however, that public opinion and growing opposition to the war resulted in countercultural symbols gaining popularity as tattoo designs: peace sign, marijuana leaves, mushrooms, swastikas, motorcycle emblems. Govenar (1981:xxiv) notes that many older tattooists refused to tattoo these new designs, though many eventually came around once they began losing business.

By the mid-20th century tattooing was firmly established as a deviant practice in the public mind. Consumers usually were seen as being drawn from marginal, rootless, and dangerously unconventional social groups. Because of the historical course of tattooing in the West, the tattoo is conventionally defined as an indication of the bearer's alienation from main stream norms and social networks. It is voluntary stigma that symbolically isolates the bearer from "normals" (read straights), as well as identifying the bearer as a member of a select group. When publically displayed the tattoo can act as a source of mutual accessibility (Sanders 1988:397,401).

The Tattoo Renaissance

Western tattooing, since the 1800s, was practiced outside the 'institution' of the art world. Tattoo designs tended to be relatively crude and highly conventionalized. Death symbols (skulls, grim reapers), certain animals (panthers, eagles, snakes),

'prostitutish' women, and military designs predominated. Traditional clientele, aside from aristocratic 'exceptions', were young men from the working class who acquired a number of small, unrelated, 'badge-like' designs without considerations of the continuity of the tattoos upon the body. Practitioners were also usually working class, unassociated with the art world, and motivated by economics. Skills were acquired through apprenticeship; value emphasized technical skill rather than aesthetics (Sanders 1989b:18). Despite the fadism of elites with tattooing, the middle class viewed tattooing as a 'decorative cultural product' dispensed by unskilled and unclean practitioners from 'dingy shops in urban slums.'(ibid:19).

The last two decades have brought a renaissance to the tattoo world. Contemporary tattooing is undergoing this transition from a (generally disvalued) craft to a (partially legitimated) art form (Sanders 1989b:24). Younger tattooists, often with university or art school backgrounds and knowledge of traditional artistic media, are exploring tattooing as a new form of expression. These new artists draw images from such diverse sources as fantasy and science fiction, traditional Japanese styles, tribal designs, portraiture, and abstract expressionism (Sanders 1989:233). The motivation for creating and receiving these tattoos is taken up in chapters 3 and 4.

Historically, one can garner a sense of how tattooing was associated with deviance over time. This association continues to be correlated in the discussions about tattooing found within the psychoanalytic literature.

CHAPTER 2

Psychoanalysis and Tattooing

Within the tattoo literature, a dichotomy is drawn between assuming this phenomena to be culturally relative, or in this case intra-culturally relative, or assuming tattoos to be indicative of deviance and maladaption. The first position is concerned with comprehending the perceptions of the tattooed/tattooist; and attempts to present conclusions that particularize, and make understandable their 'world views'. This position will be addressed in chapter 3. The second position implies a tacit (often not so tacit) value judgment. One is emic, tattoo as art; the other etic, tattoo as pathology.

I want to re-gloss the cherished anthropological dialectic, emic/etic, into the new metaphor (via Geertz) experience-near and experience-distant. This re-phrasing is helpful in collapsing the opposition between subject and object.

When I began to research images of deviance, I naturally turned, as an anthropology student, to the anthropological literature. Ruth Benedict (1934:73), writes:

> Normality...is primarily a term for the socially elaborated segment of human behaviour in any culture. The very eyes with which we see [deviance] are conditioned by the long traditional habits of our own society.
>
> It is a point that has been made more often in ethics than in relation to psychiatry....Mankind has always preferred to say, "it is morally good," rather than "it is habitual"...
>
> The concept of the normal is properly a variant of the concept of the good...and can never be wholly divorced from a consideration of culturally institutionalized types of behaviour.

Reviewing the literature on tattooing has led me to reconsider homogeneity as a characteristic of culture. Culture patterns do exist. However, when we consider conflict, and recognize conflict as affecting convention, we can see how the definition [culture is homogeneous] cannot entertain discussions of change from within culture. Homogeneous models understand change in terms of diffusion, of acculturation and assimilation. Change may be viewed as multilineal; yet still the motion is understood as a movement of A to B, or rather from A to B. This belief that shared perceptions define culture does not allow us enough freedom to consider cultural conflict, especially when such conflict is internal to a culture. Bourdieu (1977:78) describes his 'hystersis effect': "...practices will incur negative sanctions when the environment with which they are actually confronted is too distant from that to which they are objectively fitted."

Franz Boas, in 1928, explained that the science of criminology was developed based on an assumption of the existence of 'criminal types'; that is, criminality was inherited. An example would be C. Lombroso's (circa 1895) L'homme Criminel, which

associated certain stigmata with criminal behaviour. Boas felt that while many criminals are mentally and physically defective, it follows that such "anomalies...should be found among [criminals] with greater frequency than among the socially normal" (1962:123). However, the presence of a particular stigmata does not prove that a person is a criminal. Boas notes there is no actual correlation; and further, no "physiological relation between alleged stigmata and social or even physical defects" (ibid:123).

I feel that a critical reading of the etic, experience-far, so-called pathological materials will be able to explain how a correlation between tattoos and deviance over time became legitimated as a positive association. Because 50 years of research has equated tattooing with deviance (that is, prostitution, schizophrenia, homosexuality, personality disorder, drug addiction, etc.), then tattooing is deviant. Research published as late as 1987 serves to reiterate conclusions reached in the 1930s. These writings can be viewed as an historical development of the inculcation of the negative perception of tattoos.

According to Obeyesekere (1990:xviii), most academics critique Freud's models as pathological. While Freud (1961:91) may have considered culture as a product of psychic discontent...:

> I would not say that an attempt of this kind to carry psychoanalysis over to the cultural community was absurd...But we should have to be very cautious and not forget that, after all, we are only dealing with analogies and that it is dangerous, not only with men but also with concepts, to tear them apart from the sphere in which they have originated and evolved.

In order to study the relationship between culture and deep motivation, Obeyesekere (1990:xvii) urges us away from such models. Instead, useful discussion regarding the conflict and ambivalence between nature and culture, and the recognition of psycho-sexual stages in personality development, are the theoretical interests that help in understanding the movement of meaning.

In the assumptions made about tattooing, interpretations are based on psychic conflict. In particular, the categories of antisociality and sexuality/exhibitionism are given universal applicability to the phenomena at large. These studies positively associate tattoos with a diagnosis of personality disorder. Such a positivist sociology is the "model" that Freud (1961:91) himself feared would come about:

> ... we might expect that one day someone will venture to embark upon a pathology of cultural communities.

One can more or less delineate two approaches taken towards tattoos and tattooing in the psychoanalytic literature. First, that of intrapsychic interpretation: these studies are sometimes 'anecdotal', but most are so-called objective studies using the

methodologies of positivist sociology. Second, some concepts of body image; our baby in the bath water, as it were.

Glover (1952:404) explains how many notions are established in psychoanalytic circles:

> An analyst, let us say, of established prestige and authority, produces a paper advancing some new point of view or alleged discovery in the theoretical or clinical area. Given sufficient enthusiasm and persuasiveness, or even just plain dogmatism on the part of the author, the chances are that without any check, this view or alleged discovery will gain currency, will be quoted and requoted until it attains the status of an accepted conclusion.

For example, Parry's 1934 article, 'Tattooing Among Prostitutes and Perverts', often quoted, interprets the tattoo among prostitutes as masochist-exhibitionistic. Self-pity is reinforced via the pain of the tattoo needle. Exhibitionism assists the prostitutes in their trade, and the prostitutes use tattoos as talismans. Parry suggests that men who tattoo women upon themselves are homosexuals. That is, by wearing tattoos, one attempts to deny one's homosexuality. Yet, he continues: "But tattoos openly admitting and even extolling their perversion are more frequent among male homosexuals" (ibid:479). Whether latent or manifest, then, tattoos are indicative of homosexuality. Such associations, perversion/tattoos/homosexuality made via experience-distant interpretations, become the mythical 'truths' of popular culture. In 1983 Grumet cites Parry:

> Tattoos imprinted on normally unexposed bodily areas or the genitals have sexual implications and are found with some frequency in prostitutes and sexual perverts. (ibid:490)

Fisher and Greenberg (1977:17) explain that the psychoanalyst has been portrayed as arriving at conclusions by putting together "infinitely subtle clues". Formal studies of clinical judgments have shown a great many conclusions involve the applications of fixed stereotyped notions and reasoning based on simple additive formula. Psychoanalysis at its best is hermeneutic; at its worst, positivist.

The studies I have subsumed under positivist sociology are those studies concerned with the statistical validity of the interpretations forwarded via psychoanalytic theory. These statistical papers consider tattoo as a cause, rather than as a consequence of correlating tattoos with criminality (Bromberg 1935; Lander and Kohn 1943; Ferguson-Rayport et al.1955; Yamamoto et al.1963; Hamburger and Lacovara 1963; Hamburger 1966; Gittleson et al. 1969; McKerracher and Watson 1969; Howell at al. 1971; Measey 1972; Gittleson and Wallen 1973). Others disagree.

In "Pierced Hearts and True Love", Ebensten (1954:36) notes:

> It is in groups where men are forced to live close together and lacking in the usual forms of...entertainment that tattooing is highly predominant, while the criminal background of so many of these men later led to the erroneous belief that tattooing is more widespread amongst the criminal classes than elsewhere.

Haines and Hufman (1958:113) point out that inmates of state penitentiaries do not constitute a homogeneous group in any very fundamental sense. All they have in common is felony convictions. Further, "it is as useless to attempt to generalize about them as it would be to find fundamental differentiating characteristics in a group composed of all men named Jones". Buhrich (1983:394) concludes that one cannot consider tattoos as helpful signs in recognizing drug abusers; Newman (1982:233) feels that his "data do not support the previous contention that the content of tattoos can serve in making psychiatric diagnosis."

The correlation between tattoos and deviance is not reached inductively from within these prison populations, but rather deduced a priori and slotted into appropriate Freudian theory, particularly the theory of neurosis, under which defense mechanisms are subsumed. Tattoo is viewed as a symptom signifying a maladaptive personality. Berg's (1957) deviations hypothesis states:

> Deviant response patterns tend to be general; hence, those deviant behaviour patterns which are significant for abnormality (atypicalness) and thus regarded as symptoms (earmarks or signs) are associated with other deviant response patterns, which are in non-critical areas of behaviour and which are not regarded as symptoms of personality aberration (nor as symptoms, signs, earmarks). (quoted in Butler et al. 1968:112-113)

Thus, Butler et al. (1968:112-113) conclude that the tattoo is such a symptom; and while relatively unimportant to the individual, tattoos nevertheless are clearly correlated with other kinds of behaviour, in this case psychosis-murder.

On the positive side, as it were, a shift of perspective is taken from understanding the body as product to that of the lived body. Body image becomes a mediation between the biological body, the self, and the experienced outside world. Such formulations are the reworked concepts of Freudian defense mechanisms.

Popplestone (1963:15), for example, generalizes certain forms of behaviour as exoskeletal defenses. These defenses are seen as a modification or enhancement of the body that subsidizes the psychological integrity of the person.

> In consequence the exoskeleton is not only expressed directly but is prominently exhibited. Such display is conscious and socially acceptable, if not to the culture as a whole, at least to a subgroup. (ibid:16)

Three such maneuvers are strengthening the body, emphasizing the sexuality of the body, and equipping the body with indices of invulnerability. These maneuvers are contrasted with the classical defense mechanisms in that whereas exoskeletal defenses are expressed directly, the classical ones are manifest in devious routes. An exoskeletal defense is recognized by the person and effected with social approval, and may ward off an external threat. Classical defenses are unconscious; and could effect personal incapacity, if not social exclusion, and fend off intrapsychic chaos. The manufacturing of a protective structure that is shared, direct, and predicts attack upon externality is contrasted to one which creates internal chaos, distorted thinking, and socially self-defeating reactions.

Importantly, these 'offense' concepts are easier theoretically because they exclude such difficult assumptions such as intrapsychic warfare. Secondly, these concepts move away from a model of pathology to one of normalcy. The behaviour outlined by Popplestone (eg.body building, cosmetics, tattoos, possessions, etc.) is characteristically 'normal'(Popplestone 1963:24). Further, Mosher et al.(1967:32) find that prisoners who have tattoos feel more positively about their body.

Thus while we can consider useful psychoanalytic concepts, such as ego formation and 'offence'/defense mechanisms, convention continues. Harry (1987:171) explains that tattoos are commonly observed associated with an increasing degree of criminality. In his survey of the literature he states, "Subsequent authors generally seem to have agreed with and accepted these notions." However, studies by Popplestone (1963) suggest this relationship is not elucidated clearly. In his study with incarcerated men, Harry (1987:173) explains only violent men were examined, to minimize the uncertain relationship between violence, tattoos, and body image. Goffman (1963:138) writes, "The normal and the stigmatized are not persons, but rather, perspectives." [2]

The idea of being civilized is closely connected with the control and privatization of the body boundaries, a means for distinguishing oneself from others and symbolizing differences in power and prestige. Devisch (1985:394) writes:

> Shame of so-called intimate body acts, of impulsive bodily satisfactions, and of the unhygienic and malodorous body, is a projection onto the body of repugnance felt toward the lower classes, A person's social position can be detected in his/her sense of shame.

---

[2] Sometimes I feel the debate raging within me, like a Mead-Freeman schizophrenic, between understanding tattoos and tattooing as anti-social and deviant (and recognizing that people obtain tattoos for these reasons), and understanding tattoos, whether affiliative, or personal, as 'normal'.

Symbols, in this case tattoos, work when they are encountered by agents conditioned to perceive them. Inculcation abolishes the arbitrariness of the symbol. The agents in this case are myriad: tattooists, psychiatrists, sociologists, tattooed people from every walk of life. Tattoos don't mean anything. Like notes in a song, tattoos are interpreted within the score, or **habitus**, of the interpreter. Geertz (1983:43) writes, "...a [symbolic] construction has a career, and one itself imaginative, for it consists of a set of encounters with other such constructions, or rather with consciousnesses informed by them." One such construction, then, is the **a priori** interpretation of the nature of the beast: tattoo as pathology. As Gananath Obeyesekere (1990:225) notes:

> Theory has an ontological thrust in the human sciences, since it is about human beings and being human we are talking about. One can **ignore** the ontological problem in the physical sciences, but not in the **Geisteswissenschaften**.

I do not wish to infer that one should abandon efforts in considering intrapsychic motivation in interpreting tattoos. I do recognize, however, that interpretations based on assumptions of inherent pathology are as unsatisfactory now as they were at the demise of the Culture and Personality school. Further research is needed in this field, a field of symbolic anthropology that incorporates both personal and cultural meaning, perhaps with the nomology of psychoanalytic theory, and the relativism of anthropology. We need to understand change, and a model that assumes unconscious motivation expressed in cultural terms, can afford us a collapse of the dichotomy between culture and identity.

CHAPTER 3

Considerations of Theory Regarding Tattoo Symbolism

The Traditional/Fine Art Dialectic

Within the tattoo world, the differences between traditional tattooing and fine art tattooing are parallelled and recognized when we discuss 'folk art' or 'crafts'; or utilitarian art being contrasted with 'high' art. First, we will consider, via the discriminations made between traditional and fine art tattooing, how the tattoo renaissance has come about, by considering the form and content of tattoos and the sources of change within the tattoo world.

In this context, let us define the tattoo world as a product convention. According to Becker (1982:29), such conventions are the shared understandings toward the commonly-met form and content of art products. These understandings are the determinants of style. Such conventions define the materials, dimensions, abstractions, and other stylistic features. Features are known by artists, critics, collectors, and other members of the 'public'. As well, conventions imply an aesthetic: those who ignore established expectations with stylistic revolutions may meet with limits on the acceptance of their work.

Such violation of convention, that is, innovation, may gain some acceptance, and be employed by other artists. The acceptance of innovative styles becomes, over time, routinized conventions themselves. Within this model of the 'production of culture perspective', changes in artistic style reflect the dialectic between the traditional 'ease' of convention and the innovative 'angst' of creativity (Becker 1982:303).

Sanders (1989:233) discusses the organizational constraints on tattoo images by considering the structural features of tattooing as they affect the stability and change of convention. The constraints are seen as the availability of technological and material resources, the perspectives and experience of the artists and clientele, and the stigmatized definition of tattooing within both the art world and popular culture ('the surrounding society').

' Traditional' is viewed as being outside the conventional art world; images are crude and highly conventionalized (eg. black outlines; formulaic designs); as having a commercial, rather than creative orientation (responding to the formulaic request of the customer). For Sanders (1989:233-34), the traditional clientele were young men from working-class backgrounds who acquired a number of small, unrelated, badge-like designs with little thought to continuity of body placement. Also, the technical skills of tattooing were emphasized as 'dominant occupational values', rather than aesthetic qualities. Certainly, Lemes (1978) text was highly descriptive of technique. This aspect of tattooing competence cannot be overstated. From autobiographies, biographies, personal interviews, and having had 40 hours of tattooing, I recognize this

emphasis as central to tattooing. Sanders (1989:235) writes that the tattoos at conventions and in newsletters are 'overwhelmingly formulaic', an observance correlated with that of the considerable power wielded by the tattoo supply firms which are 'structurally central' to the tattoo world (eg.tattoo machines, pigment).

Fine art tattooing as form of'expression' is limited only by the supplies available; its designs have diverse sources, and it is technically innovative (colours, single needle techniques). The 'new' tattooists, as it were, enjoy the legitimation of their work as 'art'; and meet clients with "more-sophisticated aesthetic tastes and sufficient disposable income to purchase extensive custom designed art products" (Sanders 1989:234). Further:

> Although they usually bring new aesthetic orientations and modes of evaluation to tattooing, artistic practitioners consistently express appreciation for and connection to the history and tradition of Western tattooing. At the same time they find much of the symbolic content of American folk-style tattooing to be boring, repetitious or, in some cases, morally or politically repugnant. (ibid:235)

Sanders (1989:238) feels that "the stigmatized social definition of tattooing derives largely from its traditional use by members of deviant or marginal groups as a symbolic boundary-maintaining mechanism." This use, and the danger implied (re: communicable diseases) by extensive regulation by official agents, affects tattoo style to the extent that "a limited stylistic repertoire continues to predominate." The movement of innovators and new consumers is restricted. The differentiation between art and non-art is a social construction, subject to change over time. Such change is brought about by the "conscious, cooperative, and goal-directed efforts of social actors who have a vested interest in having their activities defined as artistic and their product legitimated as art" (Sanders 1989b:149-150). Table 1 on page 21 explains the factors which would affect a product's definition as art.

When we consider tattoo as art, and consider tattoo within theories of art and art production, the dichotomy between utilitarian and high art impedes the definition of tattoo as art. Historically, tattoo was introduced to the West without historical or cultural antecedents; and further, was introduced as a badge of adventure via seafarers, or anonymous producers lacking social status. Traditional tattoos, influenced by Japanese and American work, are mass produced. One chooses some flash off the tattooist's walls; and many tattoos lack aesthetic content, little evidenced by creator talent. Tattoos lack "artifactuality"; there is no defined investment value. Both the production activities (stabbing the skin with needles in a tattoo parlour) and the resources (needles and skin) are unconventional. I have found organized constraint on the production of tattoos, such as provisions of legislation/standards governing tattooing in the U.S. and Canada. Also, tattooing is not permitted in prisons, lending further to the covert nature of its production. Within the "art world", tattoos are deemed unworthy of legitimating attention; there is a lack of museum display or

Table 1. Factors Affecting a Product's Definition as Art (Sanders 1983b:156)

	PROMOTING CHARACTERISTICS	IMPEDING CHARACTERISTICS
	A. PRODUCT FEATURES	
1	Historical or cross-cultural connection to creative practices	Lack of historical or cultural antecedents
2	Uniqueness	Mass production
3	Overt display of aesthetic characteristics, evidence of technical skill	Lack of aesthetic content; little evidence of creator talent
4	Collectibility	Lack of "artifactuality;" no defined investment value
5	Use of conventional materials	Use of unconventional materials
	B. PRODUCTION FEATURES	
1	Producer has artistic reputation and elite class characteristics	Producer is anonymous, lacks social status
2	Organizational promotion	No organizational support,organized constraint on production or organized presentation as "non-art"
3	Employing conventional production process	Engaging in unconventional production activities
	C. ART WORLD RESPONSE	
1	Focus on academic discussion and critical attention	Product deemed unworthy of legitimating attention
2	Display in museum and gallery settings	Lack of museum display or gallery marketing
3	Purchase/collection by elite, affluent customers	Consumers primarily drawn from low status, socially disvalued groups

gallery marketing; and consumers, rather than the rich and affluent, are still primarily drawn from low status, socially disvalued groups (Sanders 1989:156). Sanders (ibid:157) feels that while utilitarian and folk art has gained artistic legitimacy, tattooing must first be separated from its deviant associations before it can be included in the repertoire of art forms.

Following Sanders (1989:235-236), the new innovations can be categorized into three styles:

First, the Japanese style: the use of stylized backgrounds (eg. wind, fire, waves) frames and ties together the foreground as a mural. Traditional images (eg., dragon, geisha, chrysanthemums, carp) are diffused from Japan.

Second, the Primitive style: The use of solid black, often abstract design that closely follow body contours. Drawn from the ethnographic descriptions of the world's cultures (eg.Pacific Islands, Northwest Coast, Celtic). Also called Tribal style.

Third, the Positive-Negative, or Institution style: A 'single-needle' technique evolved in penal institutions which allows extremely detailed, realistic tattoos. Also called portraiture, this technique uses black ink only.

Many tattooists are experimenting with the above styles, yet still do traditional work. Tattooists will forever have their ties with the traditionalists because, as Tucker (1983:47) points out, tattooing is "permanent, graphic, and involving considerable skills with draftsmanship (acquired largely through the apprentice system, which has all but disappeared in the realm of fine arts)."

A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

The analytical approaches towards tattooing which are representative of symbolic interactionism focus on the process by which individuals understand their world. They assume an interpretation of the actions of others rather than simple reaction. Response is a function of meaning largely mediated by symbols, and reaction to objective reality is mediated by a symbolic environment (Solomon 1983:320).

Large, heterogeneous, industrial societies have proved too diverse and rapidly changing to be meaningfully characterized in terms of a single coherent pattern. Cultural relativity, of course, implies individual relativity. There are numerous alternative patterns of consumption and time use: patterns of culture, as it were (Peterson 1983:422-423). These concepts tie in well with the concepts of product symbolism. The subjective experience imparted by the consumption of tattoos substantially contributes to the consumer's structuring of social reality, self-concept, and behaviour. Moreover, the consumer relies upon the social meanings inherent in tattoos as a guide to the performance of social roles, especially when role demands are novel (Solomon 1983:319). Tattoos possess symbolic features, and their consumption depends on social meaning. Symbolic qualities can be seen as determinants of tattoo evaluation and adoption.

As we can see, these constructs imply a unilateral affect on the individual via culture: that is, meaning originates outside of ourselves. This is a thorny problem, as we are affected by what can be seen as personal/interpersonal meaning as well.

Tattoo as Product: Tattoo as Stimuli

Solomon (1983:322-323) considers that products can serve as stimuli or causes of behaviour; that is, cultural symbols acquire meaning only when placed in the context of 'contemporary' culture. Tattoos have symbolic properties with meanings that are shared within that culture. If, then, the possession and display of tattoos are taken to be indicators of the underlying characteristics of others, and are used to infer or predict their behaviour, one should consider the role of tattoos for self-attribution. As causes and consequences of behaviour, under some conditions, the learned cues inherent in tattoo symbolism drive behaviour, either by facilitating or by inhibiting role performance:

> The actor's reflexive evaluation of the meaning assigned by others is influenced by the products with which the self is surrounded. This (real of imagined) appraisal by significant others is, in turn, incorporated into self-definition.
>
> . . .
>
> The probability of a successful role performance is increased to the degree that the constellation of material symbols surrounding the role player parallels the symbolism associated with that role. (Solomon 1983:323,324)

Purchase and Possession Risk

Sanders (1982;1985;1988;1989;1989b) has studied the symbolic interactionism of commercial tattoo consumption for a decade. The concepts of 'purchase risk' and 'possession risk' are used to discuss the tattoo consumer's experience with an unconventional service. Culture production is viewed as a dialectic between cooperative social interaction which makes up the production process and the structural features which constrain this process (Sanders 1982:67).

The factors of inexperience, permanence, expense, pain, exposure, and physical contact cause an experience of significant risk to the consumer. While one experiences the psychological risk of appropriate design and body location, as well as the social risk of a stigmatizing mark, the physiological risk of the anticipation of pain appears to cause the most anxiety (1985:18).

Table 2 on page 24 represents reduction strategies for the above risks.

According to Armstrong (1991:215), in the past 20 years the number of women obtaining tattoos has quadrupled; and now almost half of all tattoos are done on women. Using Sanders' model of purchase and possession risk, Armstrong conducted a sociological survey to assess health risks as well. She notes that tattooing is more popular and is being recognized as a cosmetic procedure. The idea that tattooing still carries the threat of blood-borne diseases is emphasized via the call to work with

Table 2. Risk Reduction Strategies for Purchasing a Tattoo (after Sanders 1985:19)

DECREASE CONSEQUENCES	INCREASE CERTAINTY
(OF PURCHASE SITUATION)	
1. use alcohol/depressants	1. patronize reputable artist
2. enter setting with purchase pal	2. attend to physical features of shop
3. purchase small tattoo	3. observe tattoo process
	4. attend to interaction with tattooist
	5. acquire world-of-mouth information
(OF TATTOO POSSESSION)	
1. choose small design	1. patronize reputable artist
2. choose concealable body location	2. rely on purchase pal
3. selectively reveal tattoo location	3. seek validating information
4. attend to aftercare instructions	4. compare tattoo with those of others

'reputable' artists to promote licensing regulations.

Armstrong (1991:220) recognizes the evident bias of health care workers. Further,

> Misunderstanding of what a tattoo means to the individual and stereotyping of women with tattoos continues. Understanding career-oriented womens' experience of seeking tattoos may provide a new gender/cultural perspective which has implications for health care professionals. (ibid:215)

The motivations and strategies presented above indicate that bearers consistently conceive of the tattoo as having impact on their definition of self, and demonstrating to others information about their unique interests and social connections (Goffman 1963:56-62). The different symbolic functions of the tattoo for males versus females appears to be an issue affecting sex-based conventions regarding choice of body site. Most women regard the tattoo as a decoration intended for personal pleasure and the enjoyment of those with whom they are most intimate. Since tattoos on women are especially stigmatizing, placement on private parts of the body allow women to retain conventional identities when in contact with casual associates of strangers (Goffman 1963:53-55, 73-91). Tattoo bearers commonly use the reactions of casual associates as a means of categorizing those associates. A positive reaction indicates social and cultural compatibility, while a negative response signifies a convention-bound perspective (Sanders 1988:419).

Within such models, be they role-defined or statistical, one must assume the motivation to become tattooed to be a social one. Such perspectives are very valuable. The interactionists are explaining to us the general system of beliefs held by the tattoo world. We have a 'sense' of the history, and how the popular associations of tattoo with deviancy has come about. We 'sense' the movement of these belief systems as

innovations become conventions. Within these belief systems, motivation must be viewed from other perspectives as well. Within the movement of innovation from traditional to fine art tattooing is an emphases on personal, rather than social meaning.

We need to turn now to concepts of individuative motivation: another dialectic between change and innovation, but one that is carried out within the tattoo world by individuals, not representations of 'consumers'; or 'actors'; or even, for that matter, the 'tattooed person'. We become members of belief systems when our consciousnesses become informed by them. As Wittgenstein notes in his critique of 'The Golden Bough', "We cannot explain one system of beliefs in terms of another; we can describe, and say human life is like that" (quoted in Obeyesekere 1990:89). Whereas for Wittgenstein explanation is only a superstition of our time, for Obeyesekere explanation itself is ontological, a human characteristic.

The Psychological/Cultural Problem

We find a dialectic drawn between the ideas that symbols are either private/personal symbols or public/cultural symbols. Because of this dialectic, it is believed that cultural symbols have no unconscious motivational significance for the individual or the group. However, symbols (like tattoos), operate on the psychological and cultural levels simultaneously. This problem in the 'relegating' of motivation between psychoanalysis, for example, and anthropology/sociology, leads Obeyesekere (1981:13) to call for analyses of symbols that are "related to the life experience of the individual and the larger institutional context in which they are embedded."

Because of this convention to consider only culture's effect on an individual, considerations of change and innovation are more difficult to approach. As well, as in distinguishing between public and private symbols, the categories further oppose the distinction between culture and emotion. Another problem in understanding symbols is that we infer meaning from the symbol itself, rather than refer to the persons who employ the symbol (Obeyesekere 1981:15-20).

Obeyesekere (1981:33) explains that analyses of symbols should consider the origin and genesis of the symbol, its personal meaning for the individual or group, and the social-cultural message it communicates to the group. He defines personal symbols as:

> ...cultural symbols whose primary significance and meaning lie in the personal life and experience of individuals. And individuals are also cultural beings or persons. There are only a few symbols that have exclusive personal meaning...Some symbols have both personal and interpersonal meaning [such as tattoos], where personal symbols are individually used and manipulated. Indeed, the looseness and ambiguity of such symbols are critical, since they

> facilitate manipulation...Another feature of a personal symbol is option -- choice or voluntariness involved in its use or manipulation. (ibid:44-45)

As was mentioned above, both disciplines, psychoanalysis and anthropology, must relate the symbol to its context. When a symbol becomes conventionalized it loses its inherent ambiguity: "The 'rational' explanation of symbols by academic anthropologists are of the same order: they also narrow the field of meaning and produce a conventionalization of symbols" (Obeyesekere 1981:51).

Psychological Motives

Psychoanalysts, for the most part, suggest the central motive for bearing a tattoo is the quest for personal identity (Hamburger 1966:60; Grumet 1983:483). Hamburger (1966:60-61) categorizes tattoos as follows:

1. Identification within a group: pachuca marks; armed forces; serial numbers; and religious symbols;
2. Pseudo-heroic: 'Death before Dishonour'; fierce courageous animals;
3. Pornographic: (with most containing strong braggadocio elements regarding sexual prowess);
4. Fatalistic-deprecating: 'Born to Lose'; 'Born to Die'; 'Hard Luck'; etc.

Hamburger (1966:61) found that the reasons for tattooing were anxiety of being left out of a group, to prove manliness and courage, self-chastisement while depressed, and defiance of the prohibition of tattooing by the authorities. He feels tattoos represent a psychic need in ego development for those with difficulty in synthesizing their identities. Joining a group, via tattoo, is a defence against recurrent stresses threatening underdeveloped egos, a substitution for family, and protection from threats.

Ebin (1979:88), in a more anthropological vein, considers the artistic achievement, and the ability to bear pain. Brain (1979:50,159-160), Roach and Eicher (1965:10-25) see tattooing as status, social and biological maturity, cosmetic expression, and occupational badge.

Grumet (1983:483-488) presents a comprehensive overview of the psychological motives for tattooing. Using Freud's concept of the ego being first and foremost a bodily ego, the author feels that tattoo could be seen as an artificial embellishment of the body boundary, as a prosthetic attempt to strengthen one's sense of ego definition; that is, the search for identity.

Proclaiming allegiance to a group, and pledging fidelity could give a sense of belonging to a tattoo bearer. One could also belong in an historical context; that is, wax nostalgic (ibid:484).

Belonging has its antisocial features as well. The antisocial importance of an insignia can be found on American soldiers ('Fuck the Army'), or depicted by the Harley skull and wings of the Hell's Angels motorcycle club. Sadistically antisocial tattoo themes are complemented by antisocial tattoos with strong masochistic trends ('Born to Lose'; 'Born to Suffer') (ibid:485).

Tattoos may contain talismanic attributes, or masculine attributes of strength and aggression; and may be seen as protection from danger. As has been shown above, seamen would portray the Crucifixion, or a cross, upon their backs, in the belief they would be spared from flogging once their shirts were stripped. Protection from danger implies a predilection for danger, and Grumet (1983:486) found that tattooed males are more likely to act out in a "macho" manner.

A further psychic implication of tattooing is its sexuality and exhibitionism. The skin is an organ system exposed to view, and is the focus of tactile and erogenous activities. A young man's first experience with tattoos, like a first sexual encounter, symbolizes the attainment of manhood (ibid:487).

Grumet's (1983:487) final consideration of the psychological implications of tattoo center around ambivalence, which is of particular interest in the sense of individual symbolic meaning, and the movement of such meaning in time and space. While the content of a tattoo will never change, its meaning certainly can. In his consideration of juvenile self-tattooing, Burma (1965:274-275) notes that the content of the tattoo seems less important than the fact of tattooing itself (with an exception of the belonging motivation). He finds that if the tattoo is neat and artistic, it is liked; if poor or incomplete, it is disliked. Much of the ambivalence is attributed to the tattoo's inapplicability to the present.

The examples Grumet uses to define his categories are only representative of the possibilities. I realize that the understanding of motivation within these contexts (other than perhaps those of ego development, and the defense mechanisms) can also be interpreted culturally. Further, some studies using positivist sociology either abandon psychoanalytic considerations altogether, or delineate the psychological from the cultural or social correlations. From these studies (Earls and Hester 1967; Measey 1972), made via the sociological construct of deviance, the a priori categories include socio-economic background and marital status. One can infer from the difficulties created within these approaches that meaning systems cannot be clearly analyzed from within such an either/or dichotomy. "If personal experience can be expressed in (cultural) symbols, then symbols affect not only social but also personal communication" (Obeyesekere 1981:102).

Final Considerations

The natural science and technological influences on behavioral science and medicine have led to many interests in causal, genetic, and functional processes of somatic, mental, and social nature. Hence, the study of pathology and madness has provided the most theory about the body. Such causalist and functionalist views are etic. Yet, "in all cultures, there exists a dynamic interrelationship between the social order, the Weltanschauung and the bodily functioning "(Devisch 1985:391).

Mary Douglas (1975:83) views the body as a communicative medium of social structural realities. The body reflects and responds to variations in the degree of social control; that is, the social order informs, in a differential manner, one's perception of one's body, bodily wants, and indispositions. Devisch (1985:397) explains that other theoretical approaches change the emphases from the knowledge of **a** body to that of **someone's** body. In this sense, the body image mediates between the biological body, the self, and the experienced outside world. Psychoanalysis can be subsumed here, for such theories suggest that the body image is an organizational principle of the space in which one 'is'. Importantly, Devisch (1985:397) explains that because this space changes with libidinal tendencies and expectancies, the body image is considered as an individual **history**.

Phenomenology stresses the experience of the subject's "being-in-the-world"; its subjectivity is anthropological rather than psychological. Devisch (1985:400-401) defines symbol and symptom:

> ..in terms of the relationship between body/self/world. If the relationships are spontaneous and harmonious and respect the unique 'being' of each pole, then they are symbolic. If they are intrusive, dominating (one pole dominating over the other) or strictly separating, they are symptomatic.

The expressive body mediates between the self and the world:

> My body as bearer is most directly disclosed in my experience of my body as something that individualizes me, that marks me off from others and the world. The experiential relationship between me and my body cannot be defined rationally and definitively since it is an ongoing process that is not to be reduced to rational aspects. The body is bearer of the inevitable necessity and unpredictable creativity. (ibid:402)

Skin is a highly unique medium. I feel that the psychological motivations and liminality of the experience create a more intense relationship between the body image and tattoo than the so-called 'ownership' of other art work(s).

The final theoretical perspective we discuss here, then, is subjectivity. Obeyesekere (1981:113) has a general proposition: "Cultural ideas are being constantly

validated by the nature of the subjective experience". He defines subjectification as "the process whereby cultural patterns and symbol systems are put back into the melting pot of consciousness and refashioned to create a culturally tolerated set of images that I designated subjective imagery" (ibid:169).

So wanting to find out more about the "deviant" nature of tattooing, we have simply to look it up in "a book". So now, we think we know: those old guys - the circus guys, the soldiers, the bikers, and them; those old snobs, bored out of their trees with nothing to do. Prostitutes and perverts....my skepticism of the methods and assumptions of the natural science being applied to social science has already been made clear. In its place, anthropologists call for other interpretive searches into meaning. The shape of an empirical interpretation reflects only that which is interpreted via the a priori categories based on bias and via the visibility of the bias. The reification of this bias between 'those who study' and 'those who are studied' are at extreme ends; the data are 'too large'. I feel that if one were to consider the psychoanalytical critique an example of misrepresentative bias, one could go a little further and suggest that the experience among the psychoanalysts and those studied are distinct events (Chambliss and Nagasawa 1969:75).

CHAPTER 4

Subjective Imagery

The dialectics between the different models of interpretations of tattoos (between the individual and culture, between the psychological and the cultural, between 'high' and 'low' art, between innovation and convention, between 'deviancy' and 'the normal') have been drawn in order to consider the boundaries, as it were, of information pertaining to our topic. Hegel writes:

> To see that thought is in its very nature dialectical, and that, as understanding, it must fall into contradiction --the negative of itself -- will form one of the main lessons of logic...As a matter of fact, thinking is always the negation of what we have immediately before us. (quoted in Vale and Juno 1989:197)

While this statement may be disputed, and often is within anthropology, one can qualify it by recognizing dialectical reasoning as a characteristic of Western thought. Well, I'm a Westerner: my head is opposed to my body; my emotion is opposed to my logic; private meaning is opposed to public meaning.

How well have I outlined the origins of tattooing, the social and cultural messages it communicates, or its personal meanings? That these dialectics are drawn reflects a logical ordering of theoretical concepts to understand empirical (that is, observable) phenomena. These dialectics are themselves not empirical phenomena but ideas of such phenomena, as Obeyesekere (1981:9-10) points out.

This final chapter, concerning the interpretations of tattoos and tattooing, the subjective, is decidedly the most ambiguous. I define as subjective my personal experiences with the tattoo world, the autobiographical and biographical studies, anecdotes, and interviews. The literature above has been 'subjectificated' as well by now. I have authored the text which will guide us to what tattoos mean(ings). I decided what went where, if it was to be included, if it was important.

My own body art is not insignificant. I was tattooed for some 40 hours over the course of some months nine years ago. Before, during, and since then, I have associated with many tattooed people, and have learned a great deal. It is with my authority, then, that ultimately the interpretation of tattoos are given. All people, from all walks of life, get tattoos; some impulsively, many with a great deal of thought (note the traditional/fine art contrast here). I venture that for every generalized conclusion or interpretation reached on the nature of the phenomenon, there are particular individuals which reflect the conclusion perfectly. Conversely, every conclusion or interpretation has exceptions.

I think tattoos are beautiful. The art is a part of you, not separate like other forms of art. Tattoos are affiliative in that you become a member of the tattooed world.

If someone reacts in disgust, one knows that this person is probably not someone one would want to associate with; you have been judged via a normative ethic that is abnormal to you. A positive reaction gives one the sense of having met a type of kindred. I feel as though I have an extra strength, a talisman if you will, that empowers me.

Getting a tattoo is a rite of passage. The liminality of pain, the knowledge that you withstood such pain stoically, the ambivalence felt at the knowledge that hours more lay ahead, talking with others, watching.

There are many kinds of tattoos, and many reasons for getting them. I feel that within the last 10-20 years people who would not have, are now re-considering tattoo as an art form to own; and there are a growing number of tattooists whose works can be defined along **any** point in the continua, as it were, between the traditional and fine art techniques, who are exploring the medium with beautiful results. Tattoos are becoming more individualistic, and the symbolism of the work is becoming more personal. I think it is entirely possible that the same number of people over the years have been getting tattoos, somewhere around 12 percent. Such re-considerations, such as among women, may be due to the alteration of the more traditional environment of the tattoo shop to that of 'customized body art studios', though I could just as easily question Armstrong's (1991) sources.

Such general statements aside, I want to offer narratives which I feel can 'flesh out', as it were, the theoretical structures I have outlined. I feel that such 'thick description' will allow for insight into the reasons for the tattoo renaissance. Further, the hermeneutic relationship between the text and reader will be based on the structural and theoretical considerations of the previous chapters. Also, I find that academically, one has great freedom in compiling narratives, because each new piece of knowledge fits in somewhere, has some relevance; to show why one has drawn one's boundaries. I have selected those pieces that represent my concern with the movement of meaning.

From George Burchett, tattooist: Burchett's text (1958) is an autobiography of the early days of Western tattooing in England. He died in 1953, just before he turned 81. His editor, Peter Leighton notes, "The last time I consulted George Burchett I told him that his book would run to 60,000 words. 'Sixty thousand words!', he exclaimed scornfully, 'I can tell you sixty thousand words about tattooing between this pint and the next...'" (Burchett 1958:5).

> • Some insist that the over-riding motive behind all bodily decoration, including tattooing, is sexual.
>
> In my young days we were a bit prudish on this subject, although forthright enough on others. I do not argue with this theory. It seems to me you can say the same of most human activities and not be wrong. But 'sexual' does not mean perverted. Naturally, I am angry if it is suggested, and it has been,

that tattooing is associated with abnormality. Forty or fifty years ago, according to reliable data, one of every three men of the working class, most regular soldiers -- and many officers -- and practically all sailors were tattooed. There may be fewer now, though sailors still generally carry on with the tradition. I am not a psychiatrist, but I do know that the accusation of mental or emotional aberration is just not true, unless nearly everyone is abnormal (ibid:27).

• [As a boy] my life was centered on [Brighton] beach, where the fishing boats lay and the seamen told their tales as they worked...The sailors were very, very old, or so they seemed. Several had been on speaking terms with Lord Nelson, Columbus, Captain Cook, Boney and the Iron Duke, not to mention the Sultan of Zanzibar, the Caliph of Baghdad and a string of potentates and pirates extending to the South Seas. I lost count of the times we boys were spanked for coming home late for tea. It was so difficult explaining that we had just been around the world (ibid:35).

• References which I found in some books on psychology and psychoanalysis seem to suggest there is a connection between the process of tattooing of certain designs and the act of love-making. I cannot, in all honesty, confirm this. Even if the design chosen was of a female figure, the tattooing was carried out in such a matter-of-fact manner that I fail to see how any 'gratification' ascribed by some scientists to the process could be experienced by the customer. Certainly I never observed any such symptoms in my clients (ibid:86).

• Many young men commissioned a small design expressing their 'Love to Mother'. Many young men? There were thousands of them!. It was always mother, never father. Almost since I can remember, I have been repeating the same simple tattoo, a heart and the inscription 'Mother', sometimes with the initials. Maybe a psychiatrist would say that the impulse was some kind of 'Oedipus complex'. But I very much doubt it. These customers came from every walk of life; some were rough fellows, sailors, or labourers; others were palefaced, bespectacled youths working at an office desk. The week before Mother's Day each year brought a queue of these customers to my waiting-room (ibid:88).

• I got so sick at the sight of [them] that I removed all the hearts and Cupids from my design books. Innocently, I thought this might lead my clients to choose something else. Deep in thought they would go through my books examining ten thousand different pictures. Then, as if struck by the forked lightning of imagination, they would ask: 'Please, can you make a heart, pierced by an arrow?' I made them, I made them. It was my work and I loved it (ibid:96-97).

• Incidently, it was Macdonald who created the word tattoo-ist. Tattoo artists had always called themselves tattoo-ers. But Macdonald insisted that an artist is a tattoo-ist and only dabblers and low alley-fellows should be described as tattoo-ers. He emphasized this distinction when examining work which did not meet with his approval. 'Milord, this I regret to say, is a piece done by a tattoo-er,' he would tell a client who sought improvement on some crude tattooing done, perhaps, after a heavy night in one of the outposts of the Empire (ibid:106).

From Stoney St. Clair, 'tattooer': These narratives are extracted from the text Stoney Knows How: Life as a Tattoo Artist, compiled by Alan Govenar (1981), a folklorist from the University of Kentucky. This text is a personal history of American tattooing and of the circus and the carnival from 1928 to 1976.

• During those years [1930s-40s], there were a lot more tattooed men and women than there are now. And there were more tattooers. I say tattooers. I won't say pork-and-beaners like we have now.

For example, when you go up to California now, you'll find a few tattooers, men like Bob Shaw and Doc Webb. I'll even include Painless Nell even though Nell and I don't have the same ideas. Yes, those people are tattooers. They know the game. They're out of the Old School. The rest of the tattooers you find out in California are just pork-and-beaners. They're trying to glorify tattooing into something it's not. Let me tell you something, good buddy. When you have things going around like that card I gave you the other day from that woman who calls herself something she's not, it's going to hurt business. If they want to make themselves into gods or something, they're not good tattooers. They've been at it a year or two and don't care hell or high water. They want to get their names in print. They want to be famous (ibid:64).

• People of all walks of life get tattooed. You can go right to this workhouse here and you can find tramps that have been in and out of there all their life, drinking wine and everything, and you couldn't put a tattoo on them. They have no desire for it. Then you're liable to walk into a bank and see a guy wearing a new shirt and a tie and under his clothes, he's got tattoos. You never know.

Don't let anybody ever blame it on any one particular reason. There are as many different reasons for getting tattooed as there are people. Be careful. When someone tells you that he was drunk when he got a tattoo that was done professionally and right, he's probably lying for this reason: a professional put it on him, and a professional will not tattoo a man's that drinking. Now, this man has been ridiculed. He's been tattooed. He's been ridiculed by his mother, his wife. Somebody has said, "Oh, what the devil did you do that for?" So, he gets tired of that and his out is, "Oh, I was drunk." That's the way it works (ibid:100).

• Why does anyone get tattooed? Why do women wear lipstick? What do you wear a ring for? You do it for somebody else to see. A tattoo is more valuable than jewelry. You can't steal a tattoo. Nobody can steal it. You can't lose a tattoo as long as you keep your arm out from under freight trains (ibid:102).

• There are a lot of young tattooers who are doing the art a lot of damage, but I know some old ones that did that too. We just shunned them. I say "we" because I'm part of the Old School. Look, I know some good tattooers. Dave Boucher is one of them. He's a good tattooer buddy. I'd rather have Dave tattoo me more than anyone else around (ibid:111).[3]

• I can recognize different tattooers' work. Well, you know your own handwriting, don't you? I can tell different shading, different types of techniques. We've been talking about the Old School. Yeah, knowing other tattooers' work is part of the Old School, but it takes time, buddy. It's not easy. You got to crawl before you can walk.
I tell people everyday that if this machine had an eraser, I'd be a millionaire.
That's right. The guy that comes in here has to respect me. If a guy hold still for me, I'll do a good tattoo, You see that sign out front: "Stoney Knows How." Well, if a guy carries on, gives me a hard time, Stoney forgets how (ibid 111-112).

• I says [to Boucher], "You want to know the quickest way to succeed and get you feet on the ground, start this thing off right. You follow success. You copy it." That's right. Find any successful man if you're going into any kind of business. Find a guy that's in the same type of business as you and follow some of his traits. You follow money and you're following success (ibid:109).

• Tattooing is human adornment. The tattoo won't wear off because the dye is under the skin. The dye is nothing new. The machines haven't changed much. The needles haven't changed much since I got in the business. An Old School tattooer is someone who doesn't try to get fancy and outdo another man. He doesn't put mercury in his colours so that his colours get brighter. He doesn't put out a sign, "The only recognized tattooer this side of the Mississippi River or Boscahooie." Now a lot of these young tattooers are doing just that. They're trying to glorify it. The Old School of tattooers didn't fight each other. They realized they were a minority group. They knew that you wouldn't find a tattooer on every street corner. They knew that they weren't going to let you put a tattoo shop on the White House lawn. Do you see what I'm talking about?

---

[3]St. Clair taught Dave Boucher in 1970. Boucher works in Toledo and has since graduated from that university with a degree in fine arts with honours (Govenar 1981:xxix).

> Some of these young fellas, First of Mays (we call them in the circus business), haven't been in the business too long, but they think they know it all. That's right. Some of them, not all of them, haven't copied the Old School and they're cutting each other's throats. They're making it bad for everybody. They make the public look down on it more. When I say public, I don't mean the young upstarts that want to come in half-drunk into your place. I'm talking about people that wash their necks and discipline their children (ibid 138-139).

From Don Ed Hardy, tattooist: Hardy is an graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute. Govenar (1981:xxix) notes that St. Clair was impressed with Hardy in his knowledge of the history and significance of tattooing. He has worked with many Old School artists and now exemplifies the 'New Wave' of tattooing, which is stylistically eclectic and committed to creating fine art. As editor of Tattootime, he hopes to 'raise artistic standards, to extend the range and complexity of symbolism depicted, while reinvestigating and preserving past traditions' (Vale and Juno 1989:50). These narratives are taken from Vale and Juno (1989).

> • A tattoo is an affirmation: you put it on yourself with the knowledge that **this body is yours to have and enjoy while you're here**. You have fun with it, and nobody else can control (supposedly) what you do with it. That's why tattooing is such a big thing in prison: it's an expression of freedom -- one of the **only** expressions of freedom there. They can lock you down, control everything **but**: "I've got my mind, and I can tattoo my body -- alter it my way as an act of **personal will**" (quoted in Vale and Juno 1989:51).
>
> • The permanence really hits them, and that is linked to mortality. And that's why the skull tattoos really **ice** it...Tattoos always tell you more about the people looking at them, than the person wearing them! (laughs) They're like geiger counter reading out people's fears...(ibid:51).
>
> • Tattooing is basically anti-repressive. I think people's main subconscious motivation is to clarify something **about** themselves **to** themselves, and only **incidentally** (Although it depends on the individual; some humans are peacocks) to show other people. It's mainly to prove or clarify something they feel about themselves, and nurture that: "Okay, well I **am** this" -- it's kind of an empowerment on a personal level (ibid:51).
>
> • Most tattooers thought that was **all** that would ever get tattooed: Kids going through their rite of passage of becoming adults, who though the tattoo went along with that and their military service. But nowadays most of my clients are over 30; a lot of them are in their 40s and even older, and they're people who have thought about it for a long time, and decided to get major work (ibid:51).

• I knew that after enough years and a few thousand tattoos I could get the technical skill to make the machines do things that nobody had done -- I **did** that. Now the big problem was getting people to wear them...I can talk volumes about the whole moral responsibility of people doing tattoos, because to me this was the ultimate art form in the world for really forcing you to question what you're doing as an artist: what your motives are, where your ego is involved, and what might be **pure intent** or just **fucked-up strutting** (ibid:52).

• It's great seeing people light up to other realms. It's like -- if they see tribal work for the first time, they might realize, "oh, it doesn't have to be a **picture** of something",and then start exploring a whole new area. You never insist,"**this** is the best way to do it." And you can't dogmatically say that tribal work is better, ot more "refined" or "pure" than say, big American eagles, because every individual is different (ibid:53).

• When I started tattooing, and it was like getting a giant shock: "Wow, this really has **power**, and it really has **magic**; it has real **balls** to it and a very strong connection to humanity. It's something that people feel really strongly about. **Even** if it might be corny images, people are very sincere about this; there's a genuine emotional connection" (ibid:53).

• People still regard tattooing as a freak activity, but at least they've **seen** it, and they know **somebody** --the guy down the street whose aunt has a tattoo! That's how it'll grow in the culture. In another 50 years it'll be much more pervasive (ibid:54).

• I have a client with a lot of tribal work..who wanted this piece which was..a big '40s **va-va-voom** tits-and-ass nurse. And he wanted it next to a lot of Tibetan Tantric imagery. For years he had been reluctant to ask me, but finally he did: "You don't think it's too dumb?" I said, "It's great!" Because he had grown up in the forties and had a great affection for this image.

I put it on him and thought, "this is real **American** tattooing" - having all these cultures floating next to each other (ibid:54).

• I think it's fine that the symbolic and the analytical run rampant with us for awhile, because there's been such a dearth of it in tattoo; it's all been **gut-feeling**. And I think a lot of the old-timers who had greater aspirations became embittered and ended up hating themselves at the end of their lives, because they never realized tattooing's great potential. Most of them were really in love with it; they caught a glimpse that it could be **much more**, but were trapped in this time period where it was so limited...where society looked down on it so much (ibid:60).

• Like that person who wanted the '40s pin-up nurse next to his Tibetan Tantric designs -- a lot of high-art tattooers are going to see that and just **shit**, which

I love. Because they don't understand the implications and the acceptance of a person's history (ibid:62).

• That's one thing I liked about the Asian tradition: you don't give a shit about the notion of "originality", because the point is to **copy** stuff, right? And in doing that you give yourself up to a sort of **lineage**. So that's what I kind of liked about Traditional tattooing...There's something great about surrendering part of your ego to a "greater" tradition or stream of expression. I'm not saying that's for everybody (ibid:67).

From Captain Don, a heavily-tattooed sword-swallower and fire-eater (quoted in Vale and Juno 1989):

• Another example of a self-made freak is somebody who would tattoo himself all over. Once a lady saw my tattoos and my show and asked, "Why do you mutilate your body? You tattoo your body, you put steel blades down into the vital organs of your body, you burn the mucous membranes and the inside of your mouth with gasoline-soaked torches, and run shishkebab skewers and hatpins all through your body -- why?" I said, "Did you buy a ticket to get in here?" She said,"Yes." I said, "That's why -- I got your money!" (ibid:73).

• Did you know the work "stigma" specifically applies to breaking the skin -- the word generally applies to anyone strange or unusual. It's from the Greek: the term bodily designs designed to expose something unusual, or the moral status of the signifier. The signs were cut or burned into the body, and advertised that the bearer was a slave, a criminal, or a traitor...a blemished person, ritually polluted, to be avoided especially in public places (ibid:74).

From Jane Hand, tattooed person:

• [Getting a tattoo] changes forever the way we perceive ourselves and, certainly, the way we are perceived by others. On the one hand, it opens or exposes one to the outside world and, on the other, creates a protective barrier or shield against the world. For me, it is both an unequivocal affirmation of who I am, as well as a form of mask-wearing (quoted in Vale and Juno 1989:78).

From Leo Zulueta, tattooist:

• It seems that lately tribal tattooing has become really popular. I actually think there's quite a bit of spirituality behind a lot of these tribal designs, although it may not be readily apparent. The designs imply a cosmography and knowledge of the powers inherent in "nature" which those primitive people

knew much more intimately than we do. Their knowledge wasn't written out in encyclopedia form, and we are left with the **residue** - the symbols of their understanding of the interrelationships, causes and effects in nature. But symbols work by stimulating correspondences and connections on the part of the viewer (and in the case of tattoos, the wearer); it's a cumulative process which can be educational and thus definitely beneficial...even if we never **totally** understand the "original" significance of the symbol or design in question. Who knows - maybe the meaning can appear in a dream! (quoted in Vale and Juno 1989:99).

• What I'm trying to say is: I really am carrying a torch for those ancient designs. But I'm afraid...that those traditions are dying out where they originated; the original peoples have no interest in preserving them - they'd rather have a ghetto blaster and a jeep and a pack of Marlboro cigarettes. The Western encroachment has triumphed; all the old men having "primitive" tattoos are dead...The last man to have a back piece like mine, who was over 90 years old, passed away a couple years ago. This is why I feel strongly about preserving those ancient designs: besides being original art, they might contain talismans for the future, or perhaps encode some cryptic knowledge that could be valuable or illuminating in some way -- who knows? But if they're not preserved, we'll never know! (ibid:99).

From Lyle Tuttle, tattooist: [Lyle and Judy Tuttle have extensive historical and ethnographic materials on tattoo (publisher: Tattoo Historian). They are curators of a tattoo museum in San Francisco. Also, Lyle was Randy's (see below) mentor when Randy apprenticed in San Francisco.]

• I think it's caused by all the serious world problems today. People are scared...they're drawing together in clusters and forming cults. Just yesterday a small group had me make a stencil and put identical tattoos on each of them; this happens frequently now. But the real, basic reason for wanting a tattoo can be expressed in one word: atavism. Atavism, the return to primitive nature, is what it's all about. The tattoo subculture has existed in every civilization, on every continent, from the beginning of history. Tattooing by puncture has been found on Egyptian mummies dating back to 2000 B.C. And **corpora**, or painted-on tattoos, date back to Neanderthal Man (quoted in Vale and Juno 1989:114).

• [I will not tattoo a..] swastika. Although - Charlie Wagner [legendary tattoo artist] told me, "People used to get swastikas all the time for a good-luck charm. But that Hitler fixed **that**! Hitler got the idea when he was in jail reading a book by Nietzsche. The book...bore a drawing of Roland [a mythical knight] on a horse with his armour on, and there were swastikas on the saddle blanket because it's such an age old symbol! So he adopted it. I guess when

you're in jail and you only have one book to read, you sort of absorb everything in it (ibid:116).

• Some of the earliest heavily tattooed peoples were the Picts, a migratory people who roamed throughout Europe a few thousand years ago...If you came from a race that wasn't tattooed, and all of a sudden some guy jumps out of the bushes who was tattooed all over, you might be scared! Tattooing has always been associated with warriors; it's possible that early man figured out that men who were tattooed had a better survival rate from wounds, because a tattoo is a wound - maybe it develops the antibody system...maybe tattoo wounds prepare the warrior for battle wounds. Tattoo: the first inoculation! (ibid:116)

• Orientals get tattooed for **stories**, while we get tattooed for **memories**. My tattoos are a montage of my life, the tire-patch look: like an inner tube that's been punctured many times and now is covered with patches (ibid:116).

• "Tattoo" comes from the Polynesian; their word for tattooist means "tattoo-builder", because they don't think of it as an art, but construction -- they **build** a tattoo (ibid:116).

From Randy Welklych, tattooist: In an interview with Randy, the tattooist from whose shop my work was done, we discussed the concept of deviance and how it came to be associated with tattoos:

• Perverts. Yeah, junkies. And ex-cons and that that got tattoos. And it wasn't like that at all. Even, even when I was doin' it in the 70s it was...in San Francisco it was..we did a lot of business people...a lot. I was really surprised because I had that same feeling, when I started, you know, people that get tattoos are just...low life, you know. But I was...I was really surprised to see the kind of people that come in...doctors and lawyers...professional people."

And we discussed why people get tattoos:

• I've seen 'em all...from religious points of view. I think there was one guy who would get different symbols done all over his body and they were of religious significance to him. And I've seen with a group, not peer pressure or anything like that, but where a group of guys or a certain group will get all the same. I've even got one of those. But the majority I'd say were just individual preference. It was just something they wanted to have done...

Yeah. Cheap Man's Art we used to call it. You know, nobody could afford the Renoirs and the , yeah, Van Goghs and all that so they got a different kind of art form that they'll never lose.

Brenda: What proportion of clients, would you say, get a small piece?
Randy: Yeah I would say...eighty percent. Eighty percent would get small to average size. If you're looking for a price range type...anywhere from thirty dollars to...not exceed a hundred, which I would consider an average sized piece. Yeah I'd say the majority. I'd say eighty percent were in that category. Out of which...97...98 percent were...off the wall. Off the flash we had on the walls.

• I call myself a traditionalist. I'm not into the, uh, Japanese, although I like doing it but I'm not as fluent in the Japanese style as a lot of the guys in the business now.

• There were certain parts of the body on certain people that I wouldn't do. Like we used, at my studio we used to shy away from doin, women on, on the open arm because, ah, they would be looked at as being, ah, butch. You know, and, I guess it was 50 percent public opinion and 50 percent our opinion that, that women just didn't look good with tattoos on their arms so we didn't do it. Unless it was like, we did wrist bands and small things or if they had a homemade tattoo I would cover it up.

• The guy that did my, the majority of my work, was very quick. He could do, something that would take me two and a half hours, he could do in just over an hour. He was really quick. I still can't figure out how he did it, but, ah, he would lay his colour in one sweep. Like you wouldn't have to keep goin' back and forth and back and forth, it would just go right in in one sweep. And I don't know if it was because he set his needles out farther than we used to or what.

• Quite a big chunk of our business was covering up homemade, self-inflicted type, pin and needle, with a piece of thread wrapped on the end dipped in ink and poked and stuff. But I did see some out of the Edmonton Institution here that was phenomenal. I saw a guy that had a butterfly on his chest, and I could not believe the details. With our machines we couldn't get the detail this guy had...it was just amazing. It was all homemade done, in the cell, but yeah, we did a lot of coverup.

• Gerry Swallow...he started in Halifax and worked there for years and years. Almost twenty years. Came out to Calgary, and then to Edmonton, and then back to Calgary, and last I heard he was back in Halifax but he's into the ancient oriental style and it's a, it's a bamboo shoot, and it's slivered, really sharp, and the way he does it is he sticks, it's about 15 or 20 different slivers, really fine slivers, and the way they do it, from what he was showin' me was, he sticks it into the skin at an angle, and pops it. And that's the way the ancient orients did it...

...the majority of the masters do the lines with a machine, but they colour in the ancient way. And it takes hours and hours. When I saw Gerry do that...when he sticks it in and he pops it, it actually pops (pop).

Brenda: Yeah, so you can see why Mr. Burchett felt this [the machine] was relatively painless, I mean.....But what was really another part that was really fascinating in this whole book, and I'll think you'll enjoy was that the Victorian age, there was a sort of a censure against cosmetics, that these rich ladies would come and get their complexions, their complexions actually altered. They'd have their eyebrows, eyelids shadowed, rose up the cheeks. Have you ever been requested for anything like that?

Randy: Yeah..I never did it but Pat [Randy and Pat worked together out of Lyle Tuttle's in San Francisco], my ex-father-in-law who taught me in San Francisco used to do a lot of cosmetic tattooing, doing the eyebrows, and I saw him do the cheeks but I never seen him do the eyelids. But I've seen him do the eyebrows and the cheeks.

B: And the lips?

R: Yeah, and the lips..paint the lips....he used to mix colours up for hours, trying to get a really delicate, natural shade that he could implant into the woman's cheek, or the lips, so they wouldn't be a fiery red all the time. And the eyebrows were little lines. It wasn't a solid...just little lines. It used to take him hours to do that....That's pretty much, that's how tattooing started, was in ancient, ancient chinese and what it was is, I kind of don't know the names or anything but the king was the only one who was allowed to wear elaborate clothing. So what the peasants used to do was embroider the insides of their clothing.

B: Ancient Incas, well, the Azteca used to do that too. The merchants were not nobility and nobility were the only ones allowed to wear these beautiful clothes, so the inside...of just plain, would be beautifully woven feathers and gold...in the safety of their own house..

R: Yeah, and then they ended up getting smart, you know, and into that, and anybody caught with clothes like that would be executed. So they started doing it to their body. And that's how tattooing originated, from what I understand.

B: I think when Burchett was doing all the nobility, like the reign of Victoria, and George, what they had just discovered in Egypt was these queens I think, or some high ranking nobility in their sarcophagi, and that they had delicate tattoos.[4] So they said 'Oh well, these are kings and queens

---

[4] Actually, the sarcophagi in question were discovered in 1922. When I interviewed Randy, however, I had this 'fact' mixed up. The elite had had a fashionable relationship with tattooing for 20 years. The find did create another 'wave' of popularity.

with tattoos so I guess it's not so base after all.' Big rage, you know, under the cover of night these ladies and noblemen would come down and get these tattoos. But yeah the complexion stuff really fascinated me.

R: But that's delicate, delicate work.

From Vyvyn Lazonga, tattooist:

• [About tattooing, she first thought..] "This is really **it**!" Because you can do oil paintings and other kinds of arts and crafts, but to do it permanently on skin was an incomparable **thrill** - you're dealing with something **living** and there's nothing else that can quite equate (quoted in Vale and Juno 1989:124).

• It seemed a unique, viable way to express something unfamiliar to mainstream society. At the time I had a vision: how fabulous it would be to create a really unusual art on skin. But it took me more that ten years to be able to do the kind of work I had envisioned (ibid:124).

• [My first tattoo..] was really terrible; I got a skull with bat wings on my left arm. This was in Oregon. The guy was really nice, but he was from the Old School; the design was executed very beautifully but...it's covered now. At first I was really proud of it; I'd go places and show it to people, but ultimately the imagery was too intense -I couldn't live with it (ibid:125).

• I don't think [the renaissance is] that mysterious. The family unit has never been as torn apart or as small as it is now. And just from the way we live - especially the alienation, there are so many lonely people out there. Getting pierced and tattooed tends to develop a person's awareness of **memory**; the piercings or tattoos become points of reference that reinforce the self and its history. They can function as physical reminders of something very meaningful that happened in the past, and stand alone as a powerful statement of the person is or is becoming.

Tattoos can lend strength to a person, like talisman that's both beautiful and powerful. Going through the whole process of getting pierced and tattooed is like a modern day ritual that balances out the alienation this technological society has created. Because, all the rituals that have been around for thousands of years - in one or two generations we wiped most of them off the planet! (ibid:125-126).

From Charlie Cartwright, tattooist:

• I would think the primary reason for being tattooed in today's society is: it's an attempt to present yourself as an **individual**. And in the mere attempt to express your individuality, you're probably, by the subject matter, following

after tradition!...I mean the traditional subject matter of tattooing. People like the skinheads and the punks get off into more tribal-origin activities than the general public; but I think in spite of the fact that most people do tattoo themselves to express individuality, they also fall back into the same old trap, because they'll get something their brother had or their dad had, and therefore they're just carrying on the tradition, so to speak (quoted in Vale and Juno 1989:150).

• I do think some people do it strictly for identification purposes, especially if it's just a one-time thing. But I suspect there's a narcissistic streak in each one of us that is tattooed: just to see and be seen. And while all of this may seem like Vanity of Vanities, I personally think everyone **should** be tattooed simply for the experience itself; to just be in touch with primal origins (ibid:150).

• And it could be the copycat syndrome. [laughs] In just the rock world itself, any of these stars or entertainers who get a tattoo must instigate **thousands** of other tattoos being got by the general public, simply because of their admiration for that person...So you've got the motivation of **visual appeal** - because of the subject matter or the location or whatever (ibid:151).

• I think you can tell a lot about a person by reading their skin. They may be trying to present themselves as something they're not, but that's still showing a side of them. The skinny little wimpy guy who gets a big ferocious hideous killer creature on him really wants to be that. Whether or not we produce tattoos with a realistic approach, they're still a fantasy. I'm convinced that's probably the most appealing aspect of the tattoo: you can have anything you want there, literally. You can tell lies (if you want to) on your skin; fake everybody out (or try to fake 'em out). You can either be a man or wish you were a man! [laughs] And maybe you can project something so huge and universal and visionary it takes the rest of your life to live up to it. But that's all you've got left, anyway! (Ibid:151).

From Greg Kulz, tattooist:

• People want to have **control** over their body. Even if you can't control the external environment, you can start by controlling your **internal** environment. You can get a permanent mark or marks that no one else has a say in **at all**. Then these modifications can start affecting your external environment, because people look at them and react - even if they throw rocks! Tattooing is a visual expression and tends to spring more from an intuitive process than a carefully rationalized one (quoted in Vale and Juno 1989:153).

• A painting isn't just a two-dimensional surface with a funnel attached to your eyes; it's the whole room, the air you're breathing, the creepy people next to

you making pretentious comments. Equally, the tattoo isn't just a decal on my back, but it does certain things (ibid:154).

• One nice thing about getting a tattoo of bones is - it will never become dated or invalid. I must admit, I find Americans who get traditional Japanese full body suits a little strange. They're beautiful, and I've been inspired by them, but the imagery isn't totally valid for my methodology. My history of tattooing is more from the graphic style in comic books and horror movies which is what I grew up with (ibid:154-155).

Discussion

Within these narratives, I was hard pressed to distinguish clearly between cultural and personal symbols. This either/or split can easily be grounded in the experience (read history) of the individual(s), layered in hermeneutical and phenomenological relationships.

According to Bourdieu (1977:72), what we in anthropology view as structure (material conditions which characterize a class condition), produces habitus, which is defined as systems of durable, transposable dispositions; defined particularly as predispositions, tendencies, propensities, or inclinations. Now the 'and' in Bourdieu's structured structure 'and' structuring structure is not an and/or kind of 'and'. The **habitus** is a strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and everchanging situations: the effects of which produce a commonsense world endowed with objectivity secured by consensus of meaning (ibid:80).

Other social theory **does** have the and/or split when discussing the fact or the act. Change may happen and interpretations stay the same; forms may stay the same and reinterpretations occur.

Other social theory **does** have the and/or split when discussing personal or social meaning, whereas the point I have been trying to get across throughout this thesis is that the continua is the thing. The oppositions of the dialectic are not intrinsic onto themselves, but rather symbolic of our capacity to dwell on them.

The different voices presented above are from different times and places: from tattoo in the late 1800s to those of the late 1900s. The consensus of meaning, taken from an 'objective, commonsense world', cannot be understood by placing these individuals along some hypothetical time line (although it could be believed to be so). That is, for the movement of meaning to be understood, history, or time must be seen as associative with the experience of the individual. Folklorists and oral/ethno historians have recognized these 'memorates' as the vignettes that encapsulate, or represent different periods of a person's life (Govenar 1981:xiv). The subjective imagery of an individual is placed within the meaning system (read myth model) and

grounded in experience. The experience of war, for instance, is understood within a different model than the experience of homicide. The experience of getting a tattoo during World War I is a different experience than getting a tattoo by some neo-primitivist in California. It is the tattoo itself that holds us up; that equates the two experiences as associative within an idea of the history and development of Western tattooing: the artifact and its provenance, as it were.

With the idea that the dialectic between 'personal' and 'social' imagery collapsed via an individual, one would expect eventually, all tattoo meaning to change over time. Yet Burchett's comments on Mother's Day, and his inference of the Oedipus complex is very interesting. The unconscious as a motivator for action in the social world is greatly overlooked in the creation of this dialectic; hence an interpretative emphasis on the social, or affiliative, or cultural meaning of tattoo. However, the impact of Freud's theories in the latter part of this century cannot be overlooked. Burchett has obviously read the psychoanalytic material ca. 1930-1950, and found such unilinear (read pathological) interpretations as difficult to swallow then as we do now.

One senses from the 'traditional' carnival tattooist, Stoney St. Clair, that the traditional/fine art dialectic does not quite cover the differences between the 'Old School' and the 'pork-and-beaners'. Again, as with Burchett, the emphasis on meaning is that of social interaction, of being seen. Stoney's concerns lay with the values of the Old School, and that these values are not being respected by the innovators. As with our other ideas about tattooing, there are representatives of the art placed along the dialectic; and as such, are seen as transitional. Stoney's respect for some of the fine art tattooists is based on the tattooists' respect for technique and tradition. Innovation is acceptable as long as it is seen as cummulative to the tradition itself: " There's nothing new in tattooing. Sure, the styles have changed, and they'll change again. But the Now Generation can't understand that" (Govenar 1981:xxix). Stoney's attitude is an attitude that transcends tattooing: a ruggedness and respect for tradition (ibid:xxx).

From 'tradition-directed' individuals, these narratives also represent inner- and other- directed individuals. These terms are taken loosely from Riesman's (1961) The Lonely Crowd, in which inner-directed persons are viewed as able to act effectively in times of rapid change; that is, they listen to their 'inner voice' for guidance. Other-directed individuals, on the other hand, are people whose tastes and decisions are determined by what they think others value. Further, each individual possesses the capacity for each of these modes of conformity, and may change from one to another during their lives (Riesman 1961:30-31).

Before we enter into discussion on this shift of emphasis, I want to give an anecdote of my own experiences, one which will help explain a collapse of the dialectic between emotion and logic, between tradition and innovation.

In addition to its deviant associations, I feel there is a primary reason why tattooing is seen as unconventional: pain. Tucker (1983:42) notes that: "Because

tattooing is painful...some people assume that there are sadomasochistic overtones to the process. Similarly, others assume a highly sexual component to exist between the client and practitioner. Much of this is myth [ouch], generated by lack of firsthand knowledge."

Pain is something that everyone considers about getting a tattoo. People without tattoos 'always' ask if it hurts. Pain is immediate; and places one in a context where time, as a cultural category, does not exist. Time becomes personal, in its relationship with pain. With pain, one is incredibly aware of oneself; incredible because of its novelty, its shock, its immediacy. And I mean novel in the sense of recognizing something for the first time, something that has always been there: your body, your somatic experience in-the-world.

I remember a realization that I was a part of the world, of my environment, and that it was in me. How I felt, my mood, my physical health, these feeling were directly expressed via my relationship with the pain. If I felt strong, I could stoically bear five hours at once; if not, well, I fainted once and called it quits once after 20 minutes. On the occasions where I was 'up' on the pain, as it were, time was reduced to small alternating 'blocks' of existence: between the 'whipshading' of the needles and their cessation. The appreciation of painlessness was emphasized in my mind and enjoyed to its fullest extreme. The pain was there; it was coming; but it was also finite, blocked, and contained. The boundaries of painlessness, however, were not as defined, or as objectified. Rather, they represented an awakening, a novel perspective to my being in the world. The 'beauty' of beating the pain clarified my self.

This was an experience, surely; yet it was an experience that I created, that I controlled. I did not transcend the pain in any ecstatic sense of the word: it hurt. If it hurt too much, I stopped. But the pain was relative: time did not matter, or was interminable.

Because of the novelty of the experience, this recognition of what **is**, at it were, I feel that this discovery is an impetus in the tattoo renaissance. However, the experience itself cannot be understood within the hegemony of post-industrial society. The romanticism of the primitive offers such an understanding, and I think that these ideas are underlying the innovations of primitive or tribal art in tattooing.

I feel that it is the personal meaning of tattoo; its historical shift of emphasis from affiliative to **personal** meaning which accounts for the tattoo renaissance. Now, this thesis statement does not exclude other meanings; rather, the circular nature of my inquiry has led me to an inference that this point is central: being tattooed places one in time and space with enriched personal identification, an identification which, for many, is placed outside of hegemonic circles. Hebdige (1979:15-16) defines hegemony as referring to:

> ...a situation in which a provisional alliance of certain social groups can exert 'total social authority' over subordinate groups, not simply by coercion or by the direct imposition of ruling ideas, but by 'winning and shaping consent so that the power of the dominated classes appears both legitimate and natural'. Hegemony can only be maintained so long as the dominant classes 'succeed in framing all competing definitions within their range' so that subordinate groups are, if not controlled; then at least contained within an ideological space which does not seem at all "ideological"; which appears instead to be permanent and 'natural', to lie outside history, to be beyond particular interests.

A large aspect of the tattoo literature is written and defined within such 'range'; and individuals within this 'subordinate group' often **do** define their work in terms of such hegemony: that is, that tattooing is permanent, natural, and ahistorical.

Lifton (1970:319) writes of a psychological trend in post-industrial society that he named the 'self-process of protean man'. Such a process is:

> ...characterised by an interminable series of experiments and explorations - some shallow, some profound - each of which may be readily abandoned in favour of new psychological quests. The pattern in many ways resembles what Erik Erikson has called "identity diffusion" or "identity confusion", and the impaired psychological functioning which those terms suggest can be very much present. But I would stress that the protean style is by no means pathological as such, and in fact may be one of the functioning patterns of our day. It extends to all areas of human experience - to political as well as sexual behaviour, to the holding and promulgating of ideas, and to the general organization of lives.

According to Lifton (1970:318), the two major sources of the protean style are first, historical dislocation, which is a severing of the sense of continuity that people in the past have felt with the "vital and nourishing symbols of their cultural tradition". Second, Lifton considers the flooding of imagery, whereby human consciousness is overwhelmed by "the extraordinary flow of post-modern cultural influences over mass-communication networks" (ibid:318). Together, these sources alienate us from traditional symbols while exposing us to "undigested cultural elements" and endless partial alternatives in every sphere of life (ibid:318). With inner and outer life thus dichotomized, the movement of logic (read beliefs) and emotion produces "a profound inner sense of absurdity, which finds expression in a tone of mockery" (ibid:325), especially evident in 'pop art' and the 'camp esthetic'.

This suspension of belief, as it were, is why tattoo is such a unique phenomena to hang our thoughts on. "The permanence really hits them", explains Ed Hardy. During the Age of Exploration, accounts of primitive peoples were written which described them as bizarre, childlike, or with 'uncomprehending behaviour'. Stereotyped images of the "savage" appeared, usually negative (Shakespeare's "dull and speechless

tribes"; Kipling's "half devil and half child). These stereotypes were very liminal in their dichotomies; the savage was dull/crafty; lazy/impulsive; superstitious/lacking in true religious feeling (Bock 1988:6).

During the Enlightenment, however, these stereotypes were further polarized into opposing views of human nature. The first, classical, or Hobbesian view, is that human nature is fundamentally evil and violent and thus must be constrained by the state. The second view, maintained by romantics such as Rousseau, is that humans, in a state of nature, are basically good, but are corrupted by artificial institutions (ibid:6). It is this second consideration that appeals to our sense of the tattoo renaissance: the noble savage.

This is the myth model that for many individuals allows them the understanding of the somatic experience of tattoo. It must be available as subjective imagery to the individuals choosing to interpret the 'personal' meaning of their tattoo imagery. It's out there, in the flooding, in the whole.

Kulz believes, "One nice thing about getting a tattoo of bones is - it will never become dated or invalid." Why would he feel this, unless he considered his work ahistorical? Stoney's opinion has been made clear already. The sign outside his shop reads: As Ancient as Time, as Modern as Tomorrow. Why would he feel this, unless he considered his work ahistorical? Here, the dialectic between the Old School and the Renaissance collapse, and for the same reason: tradition and respect for the tradition. Zulueta's concerns have parallels in the history of 'salvage' ethnography. Like Kulz, for Zulueta the tradition is the ethnographic phenomena of tattoo. Yet it is the striving of the romantics, the introjection of admired human qualities of the noble savage in the interpretation of his tattoos, that lay the claim of modern primitivism. For Stoney, tradition is phenomenological, an experience-in-the-world in which tattoo is centered, not central.

Conclusion

How much of what we have reviewed within this thesis regarding the definitions and motives of tattooing accurately reflect the ideology (as a **lived** relation), as it were, of the tattoo experience?

Understanding movement of meaning through time is confused and addled theoretically by really **believing** that there is an intrinsic difference between logic and emotion, hence cultural and personal symbols. Does not the effect of a culture full of secular images (a culture that, according to Obeyesekere (1981:103) has **no** myth model for mental illness); the alienation; an overwhelming technological creation that doubles the amount of accessible information (for such knowledge holders, that is) every six months; would not such effects dissolve such a dialectic? A symbol is

cultural **and** personal, its emphasis, as it were, an interpretation via individual experience, individual history.

Let us consider an hypothetical, ultrasimplified example. If a girl suffers great anguish at the insecurity of 'conditional' love by her father, she may well believe that when someone was angry at her that they did not care for her; did not love her. As a woman with a partner, her life could well be misery. Whenever anger is expressed, she would internalize it; perhaps (for this is a recognizable alternative in this culture) she leaves, rationalizing that she is unloved. She doesn't recognize her motivations; they are unconscious; yet she moves in a cultural world: a world full of lonely people like her, who consciously write sad songs about 'love' and have models to explain mens' actions. That is, her life has social meaning; social meaning is created out of her intrapsychic needs. Now, this example has a corollary. The social world creates personal meaning via the experience and history of the individual: a myth model, as it were. It is these circular (re-)interpretations of intrapsychic conflict and cultural and personal imagery that allows us to consider innovation and how it changes the meanings of symbols in culture.

> All symbols - and here I mean primarily graphic symbols, though it applies to others as well - operate in a manner similar to that of a mnemonic device or post-hypnotic command. They serve as catalysts for particular responses in the audience. We see a swastika, for instance, and think of nazis, war, and tyranny. This in spite of the fact that the swastika in and of itself means nothing. It is neutral. But we have been mass-programed...to respond to the symbol in a certain way...Because we respond to common symbols in common ways, all of us are under a form of mass hypnosis. To be aware of the process is to wake a bit from the trance, to pause a moment before barking at the sound of a bell. Thomas Wiloch (quoted in Vale and Juno 1989:194)

The above quote, while emphasizing the secularization of emotion, also exemplifies the difficulty in approaching personal meaning as an affect of cultural images. Because the process creating symbolic meaning is in a profound way unconscious does not make me want to abandon this circle. This is an area, however, within anthropology that should be investigated: how innovation occurs at the negation of the bell.

From the late 1700s until the late 1800s and further, tattooing was viewed more as an exhibition for people's amusement. Its association with the elite was somewhat short-lived. Aside from its association with sailors and fighting men, tattooing was also seen as'freakish'. The people exhibited were, at least in the early days, also ethnographic examples of humanity from other cultures. It is from these early descriptions and explorations, combined with pedagogic philosophy such as Rousseau that has led to the myth model, as it were, of the noble savage. The romanticism of these ideas I believed are reflected in some of the narratives. I do not wish to lessen

the emphasis on the tattoo experience; rather, I feel that the yearning for transcendence has been a Western notion for a long time.

The psychoanalytic concepts of ego formation and defense mechanisms (renamed offense mechanisms for our benefit: the maneuvers of strengthening; emphasizing the sexuality of; and protecting the body) are clearly approachable theoretically. I have no training in psychoanalysis; yet I feel that considerations in the direction of these manuevers, as well as defense mechanisms generally (repression, projection, introjection, displacement, regression, and sublimation), could be useful in understanding cultural meaning. Further, I do not wish to imply that I consider body image causal, but rather essential, in the understanding of individual history.

Within symbolic interactionism, the tattoo is more than a "mark of disaffiliation". It may also demonstrate connection to unconventional social groups. An "expressive symbol", a tattoo is a purposive alteration of the body which has meaning for the wearer and for those with whom she or he interacts. The tattoo is both an associative symbol, signifying some connection with other tattooed people, and a symbolic object tied with the individual's self-identity.

As an anthropology student, I admit that initially I felt a little put off at the concept of tribal art. Relativism is beaten into us to such an extent that the idea of such symbolism diffusing, or of being used outside of its 'context' seemed a bit galling. Some tattooists are dedicated ethnographers. Others, well, their concepts of the 'noble savage' do seem a bit naive. My acceptance of any particular representation of tattoo is, hopefully, not the issue here. Rather, we can recognize any particular objectification of reality as a particular representation of the whole source of views available: subjective imagery. According to Bourdieu (1980:226), "The objectification [of culture production] is always bound to remain **partial**, and therefore false, so long as it fails to include the point of view from which it speaks and so fails to construct the **game as a whole**." Post-modern thinking is like a secular millenarianism, one that collapses the old and creates the new. The RastafarI, the Cargo Cults, the Ghost Dance - anthropology has many examples which express this 'death' of a philosophy. Baudrillard writes, "When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity" (quoted in Vale and Juno 1989:191).

The research into the 'voluntary stigma' of tattooing is very diverse. The psychoanalytic conclusions regarding sociopathic motivations hardly seem extraordinary, considering the data was collected primarily among prisons and rehabilitative hospitals. The synchrony of the motifs and motivations make it difficult to implement the recognition that meaning, while it is relative to context, is also relative over time; that is, contexts change as the loop between conscious and unconscious imagery circles through again.

I have two final points to make on this subject. First, we recognize that Freudian concepts are firmly established as an interpretative model for meaning in the Western world; that is, the emphasis on personal meaning in a personal/cultural dialectic is maintained or expressed by more people (as the 'commonsense, objective' model of understanding such meaning) than prior to the acceptance or existence of such concepts. In this sense, the pathological associations continue as subjective images in the world; and thus continue to influence the interpretation of tattoo, especially if we understand such interpretations as being based on experience -distant images. Second, some Freudian formulations, in this case, the Oedipus complex, do have implications for understanding human meaning nomologically. Of course, Freud is qualified for our purposes: such qualifications are readily available within the literature. Obeyesekere (1990:xxi), using an organic analogy, feels the Oedipus complex is one form of 'life' among others that exhibit 'familial resemblances' within or across cultures. In this sense, we recognize a cultural practice that, although the motifs and cultures and reasons for getting a tattoo are relevant, may afford a consideration that certain processes of creating meaning can be understood as universal.

The import of meaning communicated within the narratives were enriched by having the criticisms cleared and approaches laid out: ideas to 'hang our thinking on". The particular benefit of a circular hermeneutic 'approach' is illuminated by recognizing all these different approaches as different environments, as it were, with different histories; all taking a kick at the nature of the beast. Running between the lines of this thesis is a concern with the legitimation of the conclusions, whether reached as an authority imposed via the 'hegemony' of a prison psychiatrist, or reached as a tattooed anthropology student who 'emically' knows X to be, for the moment, true. Following Geertz (1983:66), "...[tattoos] render men relative to their contexts, but as contexts themselves are relative, so too are [tattoos], and the whole thing rises, so to speak, to the second power: relativism squared."

Now, like others, I cannot imagine not having this tattoo and being the same person that I am now.

REFERENCES

Armstrong, Myrna L.
1991 Career-oriented Women with Tattoos. IMAGE: Journal of Nursing Scholarship 23(4):215-220.

Becker, Howard
1982 Art Worlds. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Behar, Ruth
1990 Exposure: Putting Ourselves in the Picture. Paper presented in the session, "Telling Stories: Ethnography, Fiction, Memoir," at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, New Orleans, 1990.

Benedict, Ruth
1934 Anthropology and the Abnormal. Journal of General Psychology 10:59-82.

Boas, Franz
1962 [1928] Anthropology and Modern Life. New York: W.W. Norton and Co Inc.

Bock, Phillip K.
1988 Rethinking Psychological Anthropology. New York: W.H. Freeman and Co.

Bourdieu, Pierre
1977 Outline of a Theory of Practice. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
1980 The Aristocracy Of Culture. Media, Culture and Society 2:225-254.

Brain, Robert
1979 The Decorated Body. London: Hutchinson and Co.

Bromberg, Walter
1935 Psychologic Motives in Tattooing. Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry 33:228-232.

Buhrich, Neil
1983 Significance of Tattoos in Narcotic Abusers. Drug and Alcohol Dependence 11:389-394.

Burma, John H.
1965 Self-Tattooing Among Delinquents: A Research Note. In: Dress, Adornment, and the Social Order, M.E. Roach & J.B. Eicher, eds., pp.271-276. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Burchett, George
1958 Memoirs of a Tattooist. London: Oldbourne.

Butler, Joel, John Trice and Karen Calhoun
1968 Diagnostic Significance of the Tattoo in Psychotic Homicide. Corrective Psychiatry and the Journal of Social Therapy 14:110-113.

Chambliss, William and Richard Nagasawa
1969 On the Validity of Official Statistics: A Comparative Study of White, Black, and Japanese High-School Boys. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 6:71-77.

Devisch, Renaat
1985 Approaches to Symbol and Symptom in Bodily Space-time. International Journal of Psychology 20(4/5):389-415.

Douglas, Mary
1975 Implicit Meanings. New York: Routledge.

Earls, Jim, and Ruport Hester
1967 Tattooed Sailors: Some Sociopsychological Correlates. Military Medicine 132:48-53.

Ebensten, Hanns
1953 Pierced Hearts and True Love. London: Derek Verschoyle Ltd.

Ebin, Victoria
1979 The Body Decorated. London: Blacker Calmann Cooper Ltd.

Fisher, Seymour and Roger P. Green
1977 The Scientific Credibility of Freud's Theories and Therapy. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Freud, Sigmund
1961 [1930] Civilization and Its Discontents. New York: W.W. Norton and Co. Inc.

Ferguson-Rayport, Shirley, Richard Griffith and Erwin Strauss
1955 The Psychiatric Significance of Tattoos. Psychiatric Quarterly 29:112-131.

Geertz, Clifford
1983 Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
1988 Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gittleson. N.L. and G.D.P. Wallen
1973 The Tattooed Male Patient. British Journal of Psychiatry 122:295-300.

Gittleson, N.L., G.D.P. Wallen and K. Dawson-Butterworth
1969 The Tattooed Psychiatric Patient. British Journal of Psychiatry 115:1249-1253.

Glover, E.
1952 Research Methods in Psycho-Analysis. International Journal of Psycho-Analysis 33:403-409.

Goffman, Erving
1963 Stigma. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Govenar, Alan B. and Leonard St. Clair
1981 Stoney Knows How: Life as a Tattoo Artist. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Grumet, Gerald W.
1983 Psychodynamic Implications of Tattoos. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 53(3):482-492.

Haines, William and Arthur Huffman
1958 Tattoos Found in a Prison Environment. Corrective Psychiatry and the Journal of Social Therapy 4/5:104-113.

Hamburger, Ernest
1966 Tattooing as a Psychic Defence Mechanism. International Journal of Social Psychiatry 12(1):60-62.

Hamburger, Ernest and Dominick Lacovara
1963 A Study of Tattoos in Inmates at a Federal Correctional Institution: Its Physical and Psychological Implications. Military Medicine 128:1205-1211.

Harry, Bruce
1987 Tattoos, Body Experience, and Body Image Boundary Among Violent Male Offenders. Bulletin of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law 15(2):171-178.

Hawkins, Roger and John A. Popplestone
1964 The Tattoo as Exoskeletal Defense. Perceptual and Motor Skills 19:500.

Hebdige, Dick
1979 Subculture: The Meaning of Style. New York:Methuen and Co Ltd.
1988 Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things. New York:Routledge.

Howell, Robert, I. Reed Payne, and Allan Roe
1971 Differences Among Behavioral Variables, Personal Characteristics, and Personality Scores of Tattooed and Nontattooed Prison Inmates. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 8(1):32-37.

Lander, Joseph and Harold M. Kohn
1943 A Note on Tattooing Among Selectees. American Journal of Psychiatry 100:326-327.

Lemes, Andrew John III
1978 The Complete Handbook of Tattooing Techniques for the Artist. Hollywood: Hotline,Ltd.

Lifton, Robert Jay
1970 History and Human Survival. New York: Random House.

McKerracher, D.W. and R.A. Watson
1969 Tattoo Marks and Behaviour Disorder. British Journal of Criminology 9:167-172.

Measey, Laurence G.
1972 The Psychiatric and Social Relevance of Tattoos in Royal Navy Detainees. British Journal of Criminology 12(2):182-188.

Mosher, Donald, Wayne Oliver, and Jeffery Dolgan
1967 Body Image in Tattooed Prisoners. Journal of Clinical Psychology 23:31-32.

Newman, Gustave
1982 The Implications of Tattooing in Prisoners. Journal of Clinical Psychiatry 43(6):231-234.

Obeyesekere, Gananath
1981 Medusa's Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
1990 The Work of Culture. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Parry, Albert
1934 Tattooing Among Prostitutes and Perverts. The Psychoanalytic Quarterly 3:476-482.

Peterson, Richard A.
1983 Patterns of Cultural Choice.American Behavioural Scientist 26(4):422-438.

Popplestone, John A.
1963 A Syllabus of the Exoskeletal Defenses. The Psychological Record 13:15-25.

Riesman, David, with Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denny
1961 [1950] The Lonely Crowd. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Roach, Mary Ellen and J.B. Eicher
1965 Dress, Adornment, and the Social Order. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Sanders, Clinton R.
1982 Structural and Interactional Features of Popular Culture Production: An Introduction to the Production of Cultural Perspective. Journal of Popular Culture 16(2):66-74.
1985 Tattoo Consumption: Risk and Regret in the Purchase of a Socially Marginal Service. Advances in Consumer Research 12:17-22.
1988 Marks of Mischief: Becoming and Being Tattooed. Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 16(4):395-432.
1989 Organizational Constraints on Tattoo Images: A Sociological Analysis of Artistic Style. In: The Meanings of Things: Material Culture and Symbolic Expression, Ian Hodder, ed., pp. 232-241. London: Unwin Hyman,Ltd.
1989b Customizing the Body: The Art and Culture of Tattooing. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Solomon, Michael R.
1983 The Role of Products as Social Stimuli: A Symbolic Interactionism Perspective. Journal of Consumer Research 10(3):319-329.

Sturtevant, William C.
1971 A Short History on the Strange Custom of Tattooing. In: The Tattoo Book, by C.H. Fellowes, Master Tattooer, pp 1-10. Princeton: The Pyne Press.

Tucker, Marcia
1983 Tattoo. Artforum 19:42-47.

Vale, V. and Andrea Juno, eds.
1989 Modern Primitives: An Investigation of Contemporary Adornment and Ritual. Hong Kong: Re/Search Publications.

Yamamoto, Joe, William Seeman, and Boyd Lester
1963 The Tattooed Man. Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease 136:365-367.